Edited by Susie Protschky

Photography, Modernity and the Governed in Late-colonial Indonesia

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Leiden, August 2014

Part I

Governing Lenses on Ethical Policy and Practice

1 Camera Ethica

Photography, modernity and the governed in late-colonial Indonesia

Susie Protschky

Camera Ethica: Re-envisioning a period of "ethical" colonial reform

"Ethical Policy" (*Ethische Politiek*) is the term frequently used by historians to indicate the suite of liberal-developmentalist reforms debated and implemented by Dutch colonial elites in early-twentieth-century Indonesia (c. 1901-42), then the Netherlands East Indies. The reforms have a well-established intellectual history in the Dutch-language literature, where their social and cultural trajectory has conventionally been traced through the words and texts of (mainly Dutch) elites.[1] Yet despite the Ethical Policy's ideological resonance and temporal coincidence with other forms of European liberal imperialism – notably the "white man's burden" of the Anglophone world and the French *mission civilisatrice* – the Dutch program in the Indies is little known outside a narrow specialist field.[2] This volume aims to revise current understandings of the Indies reforms by re-examining them through

1 Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten: Vijf studies over koloniaal denken en doen van Nederlanders in de Indonesische Archipel 1877-1942* (Utrecht: HES Publishers, 1981); Janny de Jong, *Van batig slot naar ereschuld: De discussie over de financiële verhouding tussen Nederland en Indië en de hervorming van de Nederlandse koloniale politiek 1860-1900* (The Hague: SDU, 1989); Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben, eds., *Het koloniale beschavingsoffensief; Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië, 1890-1950* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009); Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, "Imperialism after the great wave: The Dutch case in the Netherlands Indies 1860-1914," in *Liberal Imperialism in Europe*, ed. Matthew P. Fitzpatrick (Palgrave: New York, 2012), 25-46.

2 Scholars of the Ethical Policy have long noted a similarity between the Dutch reforms and other contemporary liberal imperialisms: Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten*, 183; De Jong, *Van batig slot naar ereschuld*, 290; Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben, "Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië, 1890-1950," in *Het koloniale beschavingsoffensief: Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië, 1890-1950*, ed. Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009), 7-24 at 7. On the role of liberal political philosophies in furthering European expansion, see: Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999); Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005); David Long, "Liberalism, imperialism and empire," *Studies in Political Economy* 78 (2006): 201-23; Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, "Particular or universal? Historicising liberal approaches to

a significant yet neglected photographic source base, and in the process to introduce the Ethical Policy to a wider community of scholars on European colonialism.

Specifically, the essays in this volume focus on the photographic works of the lower officials who implemented the policy "on the ground" and, importantly, the Indies people over whom colonial elites presumed to govern. In doing so, the contributors argue that the articulation, relevance and, ultimately, success or failure of the Ethical Policy was contingent on more than the moral, intellectual and political concerns of the Dutch elite who conceived and debated the reforms. Contests over the aims, nature and extent of the Ethical Policy, and competing visions of the kind of future it might bring, were formulated in the social and cultural realms of a larger, more diverse Indies population than extant studies have accounted for.

In two regards, photographs provide unique historical access to the various "life worlds" of Indies peoples from different classes, ethnicities, religions, genders and language backgrounds.[3] First, the Ethical Policy commenced when photography began to circulate in the media and among amateur practitioners in the Netherlands Indies at an historically unprecedented range and volume following advancements to the camera, the image development process, and printing and reproduction technologies. Second, the key promises of the Ethical Policy to Indies people resonated uniquely with the qualities then associated with photography. Both suggested modernity, progress and civilisation, concepts that exasperate historians today for much the same reasons they have galvanised people in the past: because they evoke more than they define, and their meanings alter according to the claims that are made with them.

In a pattern that closely followed developments in Europe, the birthplace of the daguerreotype process in 1839, photography in the Netherlands Indies was initially accessible mainly to wealthy elites. When cameras were first used in the Indies in the early 1840s, Europeans working at the behest of colonial authorities were almost entirely responsible for the dissemination of photography in the archipelago.[4] Photographers were craftsmen skilled

empire in Europe", in *Liberal Imperialism in Europe*, ed. Matthew P. Fitzpatrick (Palgrave: New York, 2012), 1-24; Locher-Scholten, "Imperialism after the great wave".

3 The term is taken from Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), 72.

4 Anneke Groeneveld, "Photography in aid of science: Making an inventory of the country and its population 1839-1920," in *Toekang Potret: 100 Years of Photography in the Dutch Indies 1839-1939* (Amsterdam and Rotterdam: Fragment Uitgeverij/Museum voor Volkenkunde, 1989), 16-20; Paul Bijl, "Old, eternal, and future light in the Dutch East Indies: Colonial photographs

in chemical processes, mechanical apparatuses and staging techniques that required specialist training and considerable financial investment. Portraits and albums were thus the privilege of those who could afford the fees of studio photographers. In the Indies, this class of consumer typically included European planters and officials, Javanese aristocrats and Chinese entrepreneurs.[5]

By the early twentieth century, owning a camera was still beyond the means of the majority of the Indies population, but photography had undergone an early stage of "democratisation" and Indies visual culture was awash with photographic images.[6] Photography had become a highly differentiated, widely distributed medium that pervaded both high and popular cultures. Advancements in printing techniques (particularly the development of the half-tone process) that allowed photographs to be reproduced cheaply facilitated their proliferation in newspapers, periodicals and books for a variety of readerships in different languages. In addition, new social groups were taking photos and being photographed. Studios run by Asians (particularly ethnic Chinese, as Karen Strassler points out in this volume) offered affordable photographs to fellow Asian clients. More importantly, the invention of portable, hand-held cameras and roll film had broken the monopoly of skilled studio operators, bringing photography into the realm of amateurs. A growing number of "middle-class" Indo-Europeans, Chinese and indigenous people could afford to hire photographers or even purchase their own cameras.[7]

In the era when "ethical" ideologies became colonial policy, then, the camera was beginning to fundamentally transform the ways in which Indies

and the history of the globe," in *Mediation, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, eds. Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 49-66.

5 Anneke Groeneveld and Steve Wachlin, "Commercial photographers till 1870," in *Toekang Potret: 100 Years of Photography in the Dutch Indies 1839-1939* (Amsterdam and Rotterdam: Fragment Uitgeverij/Museum voor Volkenkunde, 1989), 49-120 at 49-74; Liesbeth Ouwehand, *Herinneringen in beeld; Fotoalbums uit Nederlands-Indië* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009), 7, 13; Karen Strassler, *Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and National Modernity in Java* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 13-15, 81-82, 85; Rob Jongmans and Janneke van Dijk, "Photography from the Netherlands East Indies: Changing perspectives, different views," in Janneke van Dijk, Rob Jongmans, Anouk Mansfeld, Steven Vink and Pim Westerkamp, *Photographs of the Netherlands East Indies at the Tropenmuseum* (Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2012), 15-38 at 20.

6 The term "democratisation" has been used by Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, transl. Rela Mazali and Ruvik Daniel (New York: Zone Books, 2008), 12, and Elizabeth Edwards, *The Camera as Historian: Amateur Photographers and Historical Imagination, 1885-1918* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012), 5.

7 For an overview of these developments in Europe, see John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 47-56. For discussions specific to the Netherlands Indies, see Ouwehand, *Herinneringen in beeld*, 15-16; Jongmans and Van Dijk, "Photography from the Netherlands East Indies," 21, 25.

peoples engaged in colonial politics and culture. Yet there has been no sustained study of how the reform period was photographically envisioned. Instead, it has been the words and texts of Dutch elites involved in the formulation of the Ethical Policy that have determined historical understandings of the early-twentieth-century context in which the program was implemented and debated. It has become conventional, for example, to cite 1901 as the official commencement date of the Ethical Policy because in that year Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands gave official sanction to the reformist movement that had been gathering momentum for decades in her annual "speech from the throne" (*troonrede*) to the Dutch Parliament.[8] Yet Wilhelmina's oration was short and obscured more than it illuminated. Certainly, it outlined an inquiry into the "diminished welfare" (*mindere welvaart*) of Java's people, decentralisation of the colonial administration and further "pacification" of an already occupied north Sumatra.[9] However, only a few sentences of the queen's whole address dwelt on the reforms, and nowhere did Wilhelmina use the words "Ethical Policy", the phrase the liberal journalist Pieter Brooschooft coined in what was to become a renowned pamphlet on colonial politics published several months before the *troonrede*, in July 1901.[10] Indeed, the significant impact of liberalism as a political ideology on colonial politics in the latter half of the nineteenth century is nowhere evident in the queen's speech.[11] Instead, Wilhelmina used the opportunity to express her concern for the "natives" of Java in terms of Christian responsibility, a reflection of her own devout Calvinism and the political influence of the Dutch Anti-Revolutionary Party at the turn of the century.[12]

8 Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten*, 176; De Jong, *Van batig slot naar ereschuld*, 325; Bloembergen and Raben, "Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië," 8; Locher-Scholten, "Imperialism after the great wave," 40.

9 Queen Wilhelmina, "Troonrede van 17 September 1901," in *Troonredes, Openingsredes, Inhuldigingsredes 1814-1963*, introduced and annotated by E. van Raalte (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1964), 193-4 at 194.

10 Pieter Brooshooft, *De ethische koers in de koloniale politiek* (Amsterdam: J.H. de Bussy, 1901).

11 Henk te Velde, *Gemeenschapszin en plichtsbesef: Liberalisme en nationalisme in Nederland, 1870-1918* (The Hague: SDU, 1992), 268; Siep Stuurman, *Wacht op onze daden: Het liberalisme en de vernieuwing van de Nederlandse staat* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1992), 375-6. It was a liberal government that introduced the bill to separate the Netherlands Indies' finances from those of the Netherlands in 1900, but it was a government led by the Calvinist head of the Anti-Revolutionary Party, Abraham Kuyper, that enacted the legislation in 1903.

12 Wilhelmina, "Troonrede." Wilhelmina reflects at length on her Christian faith in her autobiography, *Eenzaam maar niet alleen* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij W. ten Have N.V., 1959).

Over subsequent decades the Ethical Policy came to entail a much wider set of reforms than Wilhelmina outlined in her *troonrede*, encompassing changes to the colony's financial relationship to the Netherlands, and programs that offered welfare, education, improved economic opportunities and nominal forms of political representation for indigenous people. Contrary to the perceptions of many of her contemporaries, besides her 1901 speech Wilhelmina actually accomplished little else to deserve her lasting association with the Ethical Policy.[13] Yet the queen's words, together with the debates and manifestos of key Dutch journalists, colonial governors and politicians – all of them drawn from the Dutch or colonial elite – comprise a textual canon that has come to define historical understandings of the reform period.[14]

The canon certainly has its place. As Elsbeth Locher-Scholten points out in her last word on the Ethical Policy, the program was not a populist movement, it was the concern of an educated ruling class.[15] That *ethici* (proponents of the Ethical Policy) rarely questioned the premise of Dutch rule, merely the nature of its execution, does not, as the sociologist J.A.A. van Doorn observed, necessarily preclude the historical significance of their views, for Eurocentrism is "a perspective that opens a particular field of vision, not a preconception that misrepresents reality".[16] However, confining understandings of the reform era to an elite "field of vision" that has, moreover, been conceptualised predominantly in verbal terms arguably overlooks important alternative sources on and insights into histories of late-colonial Indonesia.

To that end, this volume examines photographic sources from a variety of genres that sample some of the key modes in which the camera was used

13 On Wilhelmina's limited claim to the status of *ethicus*, see Maria Grever, "Colonial queens: Imperialism, gender and the body politic during the reign of Victoria and Wilhelmina," *Dutch Crossing: A Journal of Low Countries Studies* 26:1 (2002): 99-114 at 108. However, on her contemporary association with the Ethical Policy, see Te Velde, *Gemeenschapszin en plichtsbesef*, 147, 151-152; Berteke Waaldijk and Susan Legêne, "Ethische politiek in Nederland: Cultureel burgerschap tussen overheersing, opvoeding en afscheid," in *Het koloniale beschavingsoffensief: Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië, 1890-1950*, ed. Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009), 187-216 at 197-201; and Susie Protschky, "The empire illuminated: Electricity, 'ethical' colonialism and enlightened monarchy in photographs of Dutch royal celebrations, 1898-1948," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 13:3 (Winter 2012): http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_colonialism_and_colonial_history/v013/13.3.protschky.html

14 The works listed in endnote 1 all rely chiefly on textual sources written in Dutch for their primary sources.

15 Locher-Scholten, "Imperialism after the great wave," 41.

16 J.A.A. van Doorn, *De laatste eeuw van Indië: Ontwikkeling en ondergang van een koloniaal project* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1995), 15.

by and for Asian as well as European viewers in late-colonial Indonesia: photographs taken by amateurs at home, by professionals in studios, circulated as advertisements, school posters and postcards, published in books and used as official reportage. In doing so, the essays in this collection investigate how a broader selection of the Indies population – Chinese, women, middle-class Javanese, people of mixed descent (Indo-Europeans), junior Dutch officials – selectively engaged at the local level with ethical discourses and articulated diverging visions of the present and future. This line of inquiry has been largely neglected since the Dutch historian Elsbeth Locher-Scholten first raised it three decades ago in her foundational study, *Ethiek in fragmenten* (1981).[17]

In its form and function, as a collection of essays and a work that looks at the Ethical Policy from multiple viewpoints, this collection extends Locher-Scholten's approach to a topic that has arguably been conceived "in fragments" ever since. Her volume, which examined the Dutch reforms in the Indies through five essays on significant figures and texts that shaped the conceptualisation and implementation of the policy, was structured thus to emphasise that, while certain individuals dominated discussions about reforms in the Netherlands Indies, no single voice articulated the full detail, scope and purpose of the program.[18] Similarly, the latest work on the Ethical Policy, Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben's *Het koloniale beschavingsoffensief* (2009), collates essays by various authors who interrogate the "colonial civilising offensive" underpinning the reforms from a range of perspectives. The theme of fragmentation re-emerges here as a variety of "paths toward the new Indies" (*wegen naar het nieuwe Indië*) that were debated in the first decades of the twentieth century.[19]

The handful of studies on the Ethical Policy published in the thirty years that separate these landmark works all concur over significant contradictions and tensions characterising the reform period, adding a further dimension to how the program has been conceived as "fragmented".[20]

17 Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in Fragmenten,* 8.

18 Locher-Scholten's five studies examined P. Brooschoft, a Dutch journalist; J.P. Graaf van Limburg Stirum, Governor-General of the Indies (r. 1916-21); and *De Stuw* and *Kritiek en Opbouw*, two periodicals that published extensively on ethical debates.

19 Bloembergen and Raben, ed., *Het koloniale beschavingsoffensief.*

20 While historians agree on the premise that the Ethical Policy was riven by disagreement, the nature and causes of those disputes remain contested: Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten*, 181; De Jong, *Van batig slot naar ereschuld*, 285; Van Doorn, *De laatste eeuw van Indië*, 164-5; Hans van Miert, *Bevlogenheid en onvermogen: Mr. J.H. Abendanon en de Ethische richting in het Nederlandse kolonialisme* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1991), 16; Bloembergen and Raben, "Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië," 9, 17, 21.

Historians generally interpret this lack of consensus among proponents of the Ethical Policy as symptomatic of a failure to deliver on the reformist agenda – and not long after its official inception. By 1920, for example, colonial authorities had begun retreating from the promise of sharing power ("Association") with Indonesian elites. In the 1930s, implementing ethical reforms became a lesser governing priority for the Dutch in the Indies, subordinate to the more pressing tasks of maintaining colonial rule in response to a growing nationalist movement. The Japanese occupation in 1942 and, more definitively, the revolution that ended with an independent Republic of Indonesia in 1949, put an end to Dutch authorities deciding any aspects of their former colony's policy.[21]

The nature of Indonesian decolonisation – the fact that its independence was gained not through an orderly transfer of power, but recognised only grudgingly by the Netherlands after a protracted war and under sustained international pressure – has left a pall of ambivalence over the efficacy of the Ethical Policy, one that thickens when the rhetoric of the reform era is weighed against practice. The assumption widespread among *ethici* that the Indies would remain forever Dutch engendered a ponderous pace and patronising approach to implementing reforms – particularly those requiring a devolution of power to indigenous authorities – that left many Indies people disenchanted with a process they saw as urgent and vital.[22] Moreover, the violent expansion and repression of political dissent that characterised the early twentieth century was not coincidental and in tension with the reforms; it was intrinsic to their implementation, for enforcing *rust en orde* ("peace and order") in secured territories was widely regarded by Dutch authorities as the necessary precursor to implementing the more advanced aims of the Ethical Policy.[23] In sum, the combination of liberal-Christian moral philosophy, political developmentalism, Eurocentric historicism

21 Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten*, 181; Van Miert, *Bevlogenheid en onvermogen*, 137; Robert Cribb, "Introduction: The late colonial state in Indonesia," in *The Late Colonial State in Indonesia: Political and Economic Foundations of the Netherlands Indies 1880-1942*, ed. Robert Cribb (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1994), 1-10 at 7-8; Waaldijk and Legêne, "Ethische politiek in Nederland," 190.

22 Cribb, "The late colonial state in Indonesia," 6.

23 H.W. van den Doel, "Military rule in the Netherlands Indies," in *The Late Colonial State in Indonesia: Political and Economic Foundations of the Netherlands Indies 1880-1942*, ed. Robert Cribb (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1994), 57-78; Henk Schulte Nordholt, "A genealogy of violence," in *Roots of Violence in Indonesia: Contemporary Violence in Historical Perspective*, ed. Freek Colombijn and J. Thomas Lindblad (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), 33-62 at 36-42; Bob de Graaff, "Tegenbeeld en evenbeeld: Westerse interventies in falende staten toen en nu," in *Het koloniale beschavingsoffensief; Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië, 1890-1950*, ed. Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben (Leiden: KITLV

and colonial authoritarianism that inflected the reform program not only complicates ethical rhetoric; it also undermines Dutch mythologies of the Netherlands as a progressive exception in the pantheon of European imperialist nations.[24] Further, taking for granted the Ethical Policy's imperfect realisation as an endpoint to a story of Dutch colonialism arguably stages as inevitable the defeat of idealistic but overly cautious reforms at the hands of nationalists.[25] Such an assumption produces teleological narratives of revolution – the rise of the late-colonial state and its dissolution in favour of an independent Indonesia.

This volume proceeds not from an assumption of an outcome we already know. Rather, the essays here pursue multiple reflections on the present and future in Indies photographs from the early twentieth century, many of which envision neither a path to nationalist uprising nor a course in colonial progress, but explore other ways of conceiving what it was to be "modern", "civilised" and engaged in civic participation. The contributors to this collection conceive of the reform era as one in which diverse visions of a progressive future for the Indies extended far beyond disagreements among and between *ethici* and indigenous radicals. Our volume thus demonstrates that the Ethical Policy evoked in studies of the textual canon bears only limited resemblance to how a broader, more diverse population of Indies peoples literally envisioned, through photography, prospects for social change in the early twentieth century. These photographic visions differ according to the photographer, their audience, and the interpretive strategies we use to view the images (both in their historical contexts and with critical hindsight).

The strengths and limits of photographs as historical sources – what they can and cannot illuminate about the past, whose visions they reveal, and how – are central to the methodological question of how the Ethical Policy might be revised or even challenged as a way to periodise early-twentieth-century Indies history. Not by chance, then, does the title of this essay, *Camera Ethica*, evoke two important works on photography and history: Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida* (1980) and Christopher Pinney's *Camera Indica* (1997). Barthes' essay – a reflection written soon after the death of

Press, 2009), 321-8; Marieke Bloembergen, *De geschiedenis van de politie in Nederlands-Indië: Uit zorg en angst* (Amsterdam and Leiden: Boom/KITLV Press, 2009), 73-8, 91-103.

24 Maarten Kuitenbrouwer, *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism: Colonies and Foreign Policy, 1870-1902*, trans. Hugh Beyer, first published 1985 (New York and Oxford: Berg/St Martin's Press, 1991), 19, 258, 332; De Graaff, "Tegenbeeld en evenbeeld".

25 Robert Cribb's study arguably falls into this category: Cribb, "The late colonial state in Indonesia," esp. 3, 6.

his beloved mother on his attempts to recover her essence in photographs – mourned the limits of photography as a view into the past, particularly its failure to reconcile the "identification of reality (*'that-has-been'*) with truth ('there-she-is!')".[26] Much else in Barthes' essay has subsequently been contested by theorists of photography, but this key observation (which he himself characterised as banal, even though its implications grieved him profoundly)[27] has endured. His lament defined a conceptual chasm – between photographic sources from the past and the nature of historical claims that can be made with and about them – that has produced much fine scholarship in the attempt to bridge it.

For historians of European colonialism in particular, Barthes' observation that photographs contain traces of things past, but cannot relay history to viewers in the present repletely and unmediated, has instigated reinterpretations of photography in both its imperial applications and postcolonial uses, processes that have in turn revised historical understandings of European imperialism. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, photographs were widely used and received by Europeans in colonial settings as images uniquely vested with the power of evidentiary proof, particularly for supporting assertions of racial or civilisational difference among and between European and non-European societies.[28] From the 1980s onwards, critical studies of historical, scientific and anthropological photographs from the colonial era began to seriously interrogate the truth claims that Europeans had routinely made with such images. Postcolonial methods of viewing often assumed that a "colonial gaze" permeated European photography and *created* the categories of difference it sought to record through various processes of "othering" its subjects. Colonial

26 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, first published 1980 (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), 113.

27 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 35.

28 For discussions of the Dutch context and the Netherlands Indies, see: Groeneveld, "Photography in aid of science"; Linda Roodenburg, *Anceaux's Glasses: Anthropological Photography Since 1860* (Leiden: Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, 2002); Linda Roodenburg, Anneke Groeneveld, Steven Vink, Janneke van Dijk and Liane van der Linden, "The view of the Other since 1850," in *Dutch Eyes: A Critical History of Photography in the Netherlands* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2007), 291-340; Steven Vink, "Photography and science," in Janneke van Dijk, Rob Jongmans, Anouk Mansfeld, Steven Vink and Pim Westerkamp, *Photographs of the Netherlands East Indies at the Tropenmuseum* (Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2012), 91-106. For discussions of colonial photography in the Anglophone world, see: Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001); Christopher Morton and Elizabeth Edwards, eds, *Photography, Anthropology and History: Expanding the Frame* (Burlington, V.T.: Ashgate, 2009); Christopher Pinney, *Photography and Anthropology* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011).

photographs were consequently found to reveal less about the societies they claimed to represent than what Europeans thought about themselves and their colonies.[29]

Christopher Pinney's *Camera Indica* challenged this paradigm. His book, which has been influential in studies of India as well as the British empire, outlined historical changes in the photographic representation of Indians across the colonial and postcolonial periods, through European as well as Indian eyes. Importantly, Pinney sought not simply to compare and contrast British/colonial and Asian/postcolonial ways of seeing India. His work revealed that, already in the colonial period, photographs taken by and for Indians selectively engaged with both European and Indian aesthetic conventions, transforming local visual cultures in the process.[30] In framing his study as an account of continuities and change in *Indian* visual culture across a period that included but was not exclusively defined by British imperial ways of seeing, Pinney's critical examination of the "social life"[31] of Indian photographs revealed novel encounters, exchanges, disjunctures and legacies shared between British and Indian visual culture that revised understandings of photography's trajectory in Asia. Pinney's work thus reversed the lens through which historians had been viewing India, from one that replicated binary world views ("colonial gazes") to one that revealed diverse, shifting modes of seeing.[32]

The essays in this collection likewise aim to examine a period in Indies/Indonesian history through photographic sources that account for Asian as well as European perspectives. Following Deborah Poole, our volume

29 See, for example, Elizabeth Edwards, "Introduction," in *Anthropology and Photography 1860-1920*, ed. Elizabeth Edwards (New Haven and London: Yale University Press/The Royal Anthropological Institute, 1992), 3-17. In her subsequent works on photography and colonialism Edwards has moved away from the interpretive framework advanced in this early essay collection. For a more recent example of the same approach, however, see Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson, "Introduction: Photography, 'race,' and post-colonial theory," in *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place*, ed. Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 1-19.

30 Christopher Pinney, *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs* (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1997).

31 Pinney's book was influenced by Arjun Appadurai's notion of the "social life" of photographs – their progress from the time of their creation through subsequent contexts of display: Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the politics of value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3-63 at 34.

32 Nicholas Thomas, Introduction to *Double Vision: Art Histories and Colonial Histories in the Pacific*, ed. Nicholas Thomas and Diane Losche (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1-18 at 4-5.

conceives vision as a "problem of social actors and societies, rather than of abstract discourses, regimes of knowledge, sign systems, and ideologies".[33] Further, in recognition of John Tagg's cogent observation that, as a medium, photography "varies with the power relations which invest it",[34] the essays are divided between two sections. The first discusses photographs that were made by and for Europeans and broadly reflect the concerns of a governing class. The second examines photographic practices in the Indies among a variety of local indigenous, immigrant and creole communities who might be conceived as sharing one important trait, namely that they constituted populations whom *ethici* presumed to govern, a contention that I shall develop in the final section of this chapter.

European visions of the Ethical Policy and their "margins of excess"

The essays in Part One are unified by their focus on photographs that were taken by and for Europeans between roughly 1900 and 1930. J.C. Lamster (1872-1954), an ex-military man with 15 years' experience of the Indies, was commissioned by the Colonial Institute in Amsterdam to make motion pictures of "everyday life" in Java and Bali for potential European recruits to the Indies. G.L. Tichelman (1893-1962), a lower official posted in Dutch Borneo during the late 1920s, was a keen amateur photographer who filled a dozen family albums and many pages of his government reports with snapshots of his life and work. H.M. Neeb (1870-1933) was a medical officer in the colonial army who took a camera on military expedition to the Alas lands of Aceh (Sumatra) in 1904. Of the three men, only Lamster's images might be said to constitute an explicit project to illustrate ethical reforms in practice. However, in his own way each photographer was a direct participant in implementing the Ethical Policy, whether as propagandist, civil servant or military officer. As such, the essays in Part One reveal unique insights into how European authorities envisioned the Ethical Policy as an ideal and a practice in the first decades of the twentieth century in ways that differ from studies based on textual and oratorial sources.

Jean Gelman Taylor's essay (Chapter Two) examines the films of J.C. Lamster, made in 1912 and 1913 and screened in the Netherlands between

33 Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 9.

34 Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*, 63.

1915 and 1923. Viewed as recruitment trailers for educated Dutchmen, the films depict the Indies as an exciting career opportunity: a place where men could bring their families and live a European lifestyle thanks to new amenities and colonial conveniences, and where hard work and energy were rewarded with the moral satisfaction of aiding progress. Viewed as propaganda pieces on the preliminary successes of the Ethical Policy, the films show the "debt of honour" (*ereschuld*) – a concept developed by one of the ethical movement's early proponents, C.Th. van Deventer – under repayment: the implementation of public health programs, new transport and agricultural technologies and, importantly, industries employing trained, educated "Native" and Eurasian men and women.

The present in the Lamster films is sanitised and the future is bright: "Aceh is in the past; nationalists are not yet on the horizon." But in Taylor's nuanced analysis the films also contain some radical insights that Lamster himself may not have intended to capture. Indigenous people appear in his films as active participants in the making of their present and future and, notably, without overt servility toward Europeans. Indeed, in Lamster's vision of an ethical Indies it was Indonesians and Eurasians who made the colony prosper. Europeans are present, but as "temporary residents", stewards who may not stay to reap the fruits of progress. Importantly, the ruling classes (Dutch officials, indigenous aristocrats) who are so profusely represented in the photographic archive are strikingly absent from Lamster's films. "Here is an Indies without the 'feudalism' of its sultans and regents. Here is an Indies of industrious native workers, not crazed by fanatic devotion to Islam and intent on killing, but natives hitching their fortunes to the Dutch, literally keeping the wheels of the colony oiled." This vision of ordinary Indonesians, Taylor notes, was prescient, for "[t]heir descendants today run Indonesia, not the Dutch and not the royals."

Chapter Three, by Susie Protschky, examines the *Koninginnedag* (Queen's Day) photographs of a lower-ranked civil servant. Where Lamster's films had aptly featured Java – the official focus of the Ethical Policy and the epicentre of the colonial bureaucracy – G.L. Tichelman's photographs featured an Outer Province where the implementation of reforms was supposed to be subordinate to the rudimentary tasks of frontier governance.[35] Idealists like Tichelman, however, saw to it that their districts would be administered in an "ethical" spirit. His *Koninginnedag* photographs in his

35 The persistence of military rule in many Outer Provinces well beyond the point of subjugation illustrates this difference between administrative approaches to Java and the Outer Provinces: Van den Doel, "Military rule in the Netherlands Indies".

family albums and official reports reveal the entanglement of ethicism as a governing philosophy with ethnography as a disciplined way of seeing. In the *Binnenlands Bestuur* (Interior Administration) of the Netherlands Indies, ethnography was treated as more than an emerging "scientific" discipline. It was a key tool of governance used, among other things, to tailor the implementation of Ethical Policies to the unique needs and abilities of different communities, following the historicist belief then widespread among governing Europeans in civilisational distinctions between Asians and, importantly, between Asians and Europeans.

In the context of a celebration for Wilhelmina, a monarch strongly connected in Dutch minds with the introduction of the Ethical Policy and thus with colonial progress and "modernity", Tichelman's photographic vision of an ethical future for Borneo imposed regimes of (in)visibility upon the Asians of his district. The Dayak, an indigenous group whom European experts deemed "primitive" and vulnerable to extinction upon confrontation with "modernisation", were not captured by Tichelman's camera. He photographed only those groups that thrived under ethical programs *and* retained their ethnic distinctiveness – local Malays, Javanese emigrants, and "Foreign Orientals". These peoples were treated as worthy recipients of ethical support, but also as potential threats to peace and order who required close surveillance.

The violence underpinning ethical expansion in the Indies registers remotely in Tichelmans' photographs; as a precursor, an intelligence-gathering exercise that might inform policing decisions. As Taylor describes in her essay, Lamster's films for ethical recruits showed more openly (but with restraint) the capacity of the colonial state to enforce *rust en orde*. Glimpses inside a well-ordered army barracks, prisons, even re-enactments of Muslim enemies defeated all served to demonstrate the colony was secure. Paul Bijl's essay (Chapter Four) discusses more explicit images of colonial violence and their troubled reception by Dutch viewers at the end of the Aceh War. It examines the photographs of H.M. Neeb taken during a military expedition that resulted in a massacre. The images are shocking to us now not only for their portrayal of colonial soldiers standing triumphant over the slain, but especially for the small, vulnerable figures of child survivors among the carnage. To contemporary European viewers, however, these children were not the victims of Dutch imperial brutality. Rather, they were evidence of parental neglect, having been placed by rebels in the way of danger, and sources of Dutch anxiety over the elusiveness of guerrilla enemies. Instead of bringing condemnation upon the colonial army, the photographs elicited European concerns over the nature of the indigenous child and its relationship to the ethical colonial state.

In revealing the blindness of contemporary Dutch viewers to colonial atrocity, Bijl's essay reminds us that while colonial photographs cannot be understood separately from their imperial contexts and the power relations that attend them, these contexts alone do not determine the meaning of an image, nor its function.[36] The other chapters in Part One complement this insight. In Taylor's analysis of Lamster's films an indigenous agency is clearly discernible to those who care to look for it in the narrative (shaped for European viewers) of colonial "modernity" emerging in Bali and Java. In my essay, Tichelman's personal vision – his ideological predilections and way of seeing – infuses his ethnographic accounts of Borneo's Asian population and impugns the "scientific" objectivity of his photographs.

The contributors to Part One of *Camera Ethica* thus consciously look through early-twentieth-century camera lenses with the eyes of historians writing in the postcolonial present, an approach that renders legible some of the "excess" that is unique to photography as a visual form and, following Christopher Pinney, militates against an "absolute fit between the image and the ideological forces that appear to motivate [it]".[37] Counter to the widespread popular faith (which arguably persists today as much as it did in the colonial era) in the indexicality of photographs – the contiguity between image and referent they seem to capture – "the inability of the lens to discriminate will ensure a substrate or *margin of excess*, a subversive code present in every photographic image that makes it open and available to other readings and uses".[38] To recognise and examine these elements of European photography in Asia is not simply a postcolonial affectation of viewing photographs "against the grain"; it is acknowledgment that the meaning of photographs is defined not only by their content but also by historical context, particularly audience expectations.[39]

As Jane Lydon has eloquently demonstrated in her recent study of photography and the emergence of indigenous rights in Australia, there is no stable "flash of recognition" that pierces contemporary viewers of colonial

36 Jane Lydon, *Eye Contact: Photographing Indigenous Australians* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 5.

37 Christopher Pinney, "Introduction: 'How the other half …'," in *Photography's Other Histories*, ed. Christopher Pinney and Nicolas Peterson (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 1-14 at 7, 8.

38 Pinney, "How the other half," 6 (my emphasis). Similarly, see Dipesh Chakrabarty's argument that "practices of the self" "always leave an intellectually unmanageable excess when translated into intellectual traditions": Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe*, 148.

39 Edwards, "Introduction," 12, 13; Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 9, 14, 18, 101, 109.

photographs and illuminates an unmediated truth about the past. When white Australian audiences in the early twentieth century first viewed photographs of Aboriginal captives chained together by the neck they did not respond with indignation to the enslavement and cruelty the images represented. Instead, the photographs served as reassuring evidence of peace and order enforced. It took generations of political activism by Indigenous and white Australians to radically shift the way such images were understood, and to challenge how Aboriginal people were more generally represented, a process that has moved beyond recognising the first Australians as victims of settler colonialism to a people with agency and dignity, in the past as well as the present.[40] Similarly, it has taken a revolution in Indonesia, and continuous revisions of the historiography of Dutch and other imperialisms, to see European photographs from the former Netherlands Indies as more than examples of colonial nostalgia, triumphalism or an objectifying "colonial gaze". The essays in Part One all critically reflect on discrepancies between current and historical viewers' responses to European photographs and query the "ethicism" of colonial governing agendas.

Local lenses on living in an "ethical" Indies

Re-viewing European photographs with an eye to their margins of excess is but one strategy pursued in this volume for revising histories of the reform era. Another approach, followed in Part Two of this book, is to examine photographs that were made by Indies people for themselves. Doing so turns erstwhile *subjects* of reform into *agents* of change, and *objects* of European gazes into *visionaries* of alternate trajectories for an "ethical" future. Looking at the reform era through local Indies lenses also reveals pronounced concerns with discourses of modernity, civilisation and civic participation that sustained debates about reform while articulating aspirations more complex than paternalistic colonial notions of "uplift".

The essays here are indebted in this regard to Bloembergen and Raben's recent study of the Ethical Policy for isolating these three important strands of ethical thought and practice. Bloembergen and Raben conceived the main thrust of the reforms to have been a "civilising offensive" (*beschavingsoffensief*), where "modernity" referred to a set of political conditions – the emergence of an interventionist state, new ideologies, technologies and

40 Jane Lydon, *The Flash of Recognition: Photography and the Emergence of Indigenous Rights* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2012), 52, 56, 61-62, 83, 221. See also Lydon, *Eye Contact*, 4, 249.

debates about civic participation or "citizenship"– that arose in the Indies during the early twentieth century.[41] Our volume approaches modernity differently, as a concept that has been mobilised in various ways according to the assertions that have made with it, rather than as a normative process defined by its causes (an approach Frederick Cooper typifies as "capitalism-plus" – capitalism, urbanisation, industrialisation, imperialism, state formation, democracy).[42] Following Dipesh Chakrabarty, the contributers here assume that "claims to modernity, in any age, are artifacts of both ideology and imagination. To be 'modern' is to judge one's experience of time and space and thus create new possibilities for oneself."[43]

Examining visions of whether and in what form Asian as well as European residents of the Netherlands Indies conceived themselves and their surroundings as "modern" opens questions of the extent to which current understandings of the Ethical Policy fully capture the "historical imagination" of ordinary Indies people in the early twentieth century. I use this term in the sense recently articulated by Elizabeth Edwards, who posits that amateur photographers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries enthusiastically embraced the camera to situate themselves in time and space and reflect on relations between past, present and future.[44] The essays in this volume demonstrate how Javanese, Chinese, Indo-European and European photographers and consumers of photography in the Indies envisioned "modernity" as a temporal proposition (a situation in time) and a cultural achievement (a mark of civilisation) in ways that diverged according to their political status: as governors of colonial subjects being guided through an ethical transition to a destination in the future, or as governed people who conceiving of themselves as *already* civilised and inhabiting the same present as colonists. The essays in Part Two therefore show how Indies people used the camera to portray a contemporary reality that sometimes upheld but often also departed from the "modern/traditional" dichotomy *ethici* used to articulate a civilisational contrast between the Netherlands and its overseas possessions, or to map a trajectory from the colonial present

41 Bloembergen and Raben, "Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië," 14.

42 Frederick Cooper, "Modernity," in *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 113-152 at 115, 124, 125, 131, 146-147; see also Carol Gluck, "The end of elsewhere: Writing modernity now," *American Historical Review* 116:3 (June 2011): 676-687 at 676-677, 681.

43 Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The muddle of modernity," *American Historical Review* 116:3 (June 2011): 663-675 at 674.

44 Edwards, *The Camera as Historian*, 2, 6.

(defined by an indigenous lack) to an ethical future (conceived as a destiny to be fulfilled by Europeans).[45]

In examining Indies counter-claims to European visions of modernity, the essays in Part Two of this volume engage directly with the question of how "citizenship" was constituted in the reform era. Citizenship did not exist as a juridical and political category in the Netherlands Indies. Those with "citizen" (*burger*) status, who tended to be Europeans, had more robust legal rights and political privileges than Natives or Foreign Orientals, but none in Indies society enjoyed citizenship in the sense achieved by Dutch people in the Netherlands during the early twentieth century. (Ironically, it was in 1920 that the universal franchise was attained in the Netherlands, with Dutch women winning the right to vote around the same time that the issues of political representation and democratic rights for indigenous people in the Indies were withdrawn from the colonial agenda.[46])

The Dutch were no different in this regard than other liberal imperialists of the early twentieth century.[47] Subjecthood, not citizenship, was the common lot of colonial populations, an injury that was aggravated by the irony of Europeans preaching enlightenment in the colonies while denying it in practice.[48] As Partha Chatterjee has noted, this condition not only holds for most European colonies of the past, it continues to be true for a large proportion of the world's population today. In global historical terms, then, citizenship has always been the privilege of a minority and thus needs to be conceived primarily as a theoretical category.[49]

Scholars have attempted to circumvent the dilemma that the absence of formal rights in the Indies creates for discussing political agency by speaking of "cultural" forms of citizenship. Some historians have argued that, in transnational, colonial contexts such as those defining relations between the Netherlands and its overseas possessions, citizenship – functionally conceived as an elite status – was defined by mobility, education

45 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), xix, xx.

46 Dick van Lente, *Techniek en ideologie*: *Opvattingen over de maatschappelijke betekenis van technische vernieuwingen in Nederland, 1850-1920* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, Forsten, 1988), 12. The general male franchise was attained in the Netherlands in 1917, and women gained the vote in 1920.

47 Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire*, 7; Long, "Liberalism, imperialism and empire"; Fitzpatrick, "Particular or universal?"

48 Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 4.

49 Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2004), 34, 39.

and facility with European culture.[50] In their study of the Ethical Policy, Bloembergen and Raben broadened the concept of citizenship further to accommodate political aspirations among indigenous people and forms of civic participation that were explicitly cultivated by colonial authorities to foster loyalty for the regime.[51]

Rather than strictly adhere to the notion of "cultural citizenship", an approach that arguably reifies a problematic concept by qualifying rather than replacing it, and following the lead of Partha Chatterjee, I argue that all Indies residents, regardless of their legal or ethnic status, can be conceived as *a population whom* ethici *presumed to govern*. Such an approach maintains historical distinctions of political inequality between privileged and marginalised groups while accounting for the different modes of agency available to both. Conceiving of those whom *ethici* "presumed" to govern, moreover, suggests practical limits to the reach of colonial authorities in determining the aspirations or even lived experiences of Indies subjects.

Ariella Azoulay's recent extension upon Chatterjee's notion of "the politics of the governed" is of particular relevance here. In her book *The Civil Contract of Photography*, Azoulay reveals how an analysis of photography in colonial contexts opens possibilities for redefining citizenship and understanding how it has been pursued as a political aspiration by those to whom it does not apply. Her acute observation that being governed precedes becoming a citizen underpins an argument that a "civic space of the gaze, speech, and action that is shared by … governed populations" includes but is in no way limited to citizens.[52] Azoulay looks beyond how photography has been used by colonial authorities and ruling elites to perform the tasks of governance, with the aim of examining the

> gap between the stated aims and what has actually taken place in the encounter between photographer, photographed and camera. Every photograph is a living testimony to this gap, even if some photographs may still lack an ethical spectator to notice them. In many instances, this gap is the place from which the spectator can become a citizen of

50 Ulbe Bosma and Remco Raben, *Being "Dutch" in the Indies: A History of Creolisation and Empire, 1500-1920*, transl. Wendie Shaffer, first published 2003 (Athens, Oh.: Research in International Studies Southeast Asia Series no. 116, Ohio University Press, 2008), xvii, 77; Ulbe Bosma, *Indiëgangers: Verhalen van Nederlanders die naar Indië trokken* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2010), 26, 106, 264; Waaldijk and Legêne, "Ethische politiek in Nederland," 188-189.

51 Bloembergen and Raben, "Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië," 9-14, 21.

52 Azoulay, *The Civil Contract*, 33; see also 17, 23-24, 78, 122.

> photography, making it possible for the photographer or photographed to become a citizen, as well.[53]

While Azoulay's study focused on contemporary conflicts between Israeli authorities and Palestinians, and particularly on the witnessing and photographing of atrocity, her theorisation of the relationship between subjects, photographers and spectators arguably has broader applications to colonial situations where citizens are only a small minority among the governed.[54] I draw upon her concept of the "civil contract of photography" implicit in the subject-photographer-spectator nexus by investigating how people in the Indies used photography to claim civic status and be seen on their own terms among their own community, if not by colonial authorities.

Challenging official notions of "Association" between elite Europeans and Javanese

The first pair of chapters in Part Two of this volume examine Indies lenses on modernity, civilisation and being governed through photographic practices that challenge colonial Dutch understandings of "Association", an erstwhile pillar of ethical reform, as a mode of cultivating partnerships between governing Europeans and local elites. Pamela Pattynama's essay (Chapter Five) on the family albums of people of mixed European and Asian descent (Indo-Europeans) compiled during the ethical era provides an important corrective to orthodox historical understandings of this community's status and exposes the limits of the Ethical Policy as a program of social engineering.

The English-language historiography of Indies society, particularly as espoused in the influential works of Ann Laura Stoler, has been shaped by the textual archives of Dutch governing elites about a community from whom they felt socially removed. The misgivings of white elites over intermarriage between Europeans and indigenous people – particularly regarding the political and biological undesirability of "miscegenation", racial mixing thought to result in a degenerate and disgruntled underclass of Eurasians that would threaten the stability of colonial rule – have therefore

53 Ibid., 133.

54 Ibid., 18. See also Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*, 35, 75.

dominated historical understandings of Indo-Europeans in the Indies.[55] Certainly, the social impact of ethical programs threatened the status of this group in the early twentieth century. On the one hand, education reforms made indigenous workers more competitive for middle-class occupations traditionally held by Indo-Europeans. On the other hand, executive positions were increasingly monopolised by emigrants direct from Europe.

Pattynama's approach to Indo-European family albums resonates with Barthes' objection to "scientific" reductions of family life as a "fabric of constraints and rites": "either we code it as a group of immediate allegiances or else we make it into a knot of conflicts and repressions. As if our experts cannot conceive that there are families 'whose members love one another.'"[56] Barthes would have appreciated the irony of the collection name for the archive Pattynama discusses – the Indies Scientific Institute (*Indisch Wetenschappelijk Instituut*) – for her analysis reveals a *mestizo* community thriving despite the qualms of white elites. More than that, it shows a private realm defiant against "ethical" interventions, where interracial kinship ties trumped the anxious discourses of racial difference propagated by governing Europeans. Indonesian matriarchs proudly occupy the centre of mixed families, and white men display their intimacy with indigenous friends and lovers without shame or stealth. Young Indo-Europeans depict themselves responding selectively to white, European models of respectability, emulating only some of their standards and blending these with *mestizo* customs.

Viewed from the perspective of colonial policy-makers, such photographs of interracial family life may well have exceeded elitist intentions for closer "association" between Western-educated, male indigenous leaders and the European governing classes. In this regard, Indo-European family photographs from the ethical era signal a subversive form of fraternisation between white and brown. Viewed on their own terms, as Pattynama strives to do, photographic self-representations of Indo-Europeans reveal a community whose view of itself did not – certainly at the level of "everyday" experience – align with that of white elites. Amateur visions of interracial "association" assumed at once a more democratic and intimate significance in these images.

55 See particularly the monographs of Ann Laura Stoler: *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's* "History of Sexuality" *and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995); *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2002); *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxiety and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009).

56 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 74.

In Chapter Six, Joost Coté provides a further corrective to official notions of Association, one from within the very class that was meant to be the colonial state's closest ally: the Javanese aristocracy. His essay details the photographic vision of Raden Ajeng Kartini, a Javanese regent's daughter whose contributions to aspects of early Javanese nationalism and feminism have thus far been assessed using her published writings and private correspondence. However, "[a]s she increasingly ventured into the public world dominated by Europeans, males and modern technologies", Coté reveals, Kartini became drawn to the medium of photography. While she never owned a camera, Kartini was enthusiastic about its potential and engaged in many genres of photography: she collected postcards, exchanged photographs with her Dutch correspondents, appeared in studio portraits with her siblings and parents, and contributed to an important photographic gift from Javanese regents to the Dutch monarchy that was linked to an ethical program for improving the welfare of woodcarvers in Jepara.[57]

Coté demonstrates that, like the Indo-European photographs in Pattynama's essay, Kartini's family portraits reveal "confident self-images of a modernising Javanese household", influenced by but not beholden to the European culture to which this class had privileged access by association. The pun here is intended, for Kartini's Western-educated family were models of Association as envisioned by Dutch *ethici*. Conformity to type did not, however, always lead to compliance. Even westernised Javanese elites often remained dissatisfied with their lack of autonomy in sharing power over "their" subjects with the Dutch. Similarly, Kartini's writings reveal a keen interest in the communicative potential of photography for informing her European interlocutors on (her notion of) the "real" Java. Kartini viewed photography as a way to participate in European ethnographic discourses on Java and in doing so, subverted European governing practices that were "predicated on a need to *know* the colonial subject". Her writings on photography challenged the authority of male elites to set the agenda of Association between Europeans and Javanese, for Kartini did not propose to offer herself as an *object* of inquiry. Rather, she viewed the camera as a means of "redirecting the lens through which Europeans had become accustomed to viewing the colony's indigenous inhabitants."

57 Kartini made the silk and silver lining for a wooden box containing 48 portraits of the Regents of Java and Madura, sent as a birthday gift to Queen Wilhelmina in 1904: Rita Wassing-Visser, *Koninklijke Geschenken uit Indonesië: Historische banden met het Huis Oranje-Nassau (1600-1938)* (The Hague and Zwolle: Stichting Historische Verzamelingen van het Huis Oranje-Nassau/Waanders, 1995), 120-1.

Indigenous lenses on modernity and being governed in late-colonial Indonesia

The next pair of chapters in Part Two of this volume examine Chinese and Javanese lenses on modernity and being governed in ways that contest colonial notions of time in which an ethical Indies was postponed to the future and determined by a Dutch policy framework. These essays show Indies people using photographs as tools for envisioning selves that were *already* modern – not by having accepted welfare and moral "uplift" from colonial authorities, but by exercising consumer choices, expressing middle-class aspirations, and selectively employing Asian as well as European visual practices to guide and inspire modes of self-fashioning.

Chapter Seven, by Karen Strassler, examines ethnic Chinese studio photographers in the Indies as "mediators and exemplars" of a "cosmopolitan modernity" whose referents were Chinese or international rather than European. In doing so, Strassler demonstrates how "photography – like modernity – did not travel from Europe to the Indies in a simple linear fashion". By the early twentieth century, the numbers of Chinese photo studios in the Indies exceeded European ateliers and served a wider clientele (often at lower prices) that included Asians. A common product of the Chinese studio trade was the *contoh*, a class of model portrait featuring photographers or their family members and displayed to clients as an example of how they could be depicted. More particularly, Strassler argues, *contoh* suggested how customers might present themselves as "modern": by wearing the latest fashions, for example, posing with new technologies (sewing machines) and prestige consumer goods (cars), or flaunting evidence of an education (books), not to mention the act of having their photographic portrait taken in the first instance. In this regard, *contoh* straddled the public world of advertising and the private world of family photography, cultivating "ways of seeing and displaying modern subjects, sociality and domestic life that became available for emulation and adaptation by subjects of the Indies more widely".

Strassler's analysis of Chinese studio photography in the early twentieth century reveals not only how this particular group in Indies society creatively negotiated the perils of retaining their Chineseness while asserting their equality with Europeans, but also how their innovative responses to local challenges effected changes in popular modes of representation that still resonate in Indonesia today. The functional transformation of the identity photograph is a case in point. It was Chinese studios that first popularised such portraits among a wider Indonesian clientele. Originally a tool in the surveillance apparatus of colonial authorities for monitoring the movements

of Chinese in the Indies, the identity photograph quickly became co-opted into Chinese traditions of memorial portraiture, replacing full-length depictions of deceased relatives with busts that focused on the face.

Such practices and the modes of self-fashioning they fostered, among Chinese photographers as well as their broader Indies clientele, were shaped by the ambivalent migrant status of ethnic Chinese in Java. An economically powerful but socially and politically beleaguered group, Chinese were excluded from the "imagined primordial communities" of the Indies in the minds of colonial authorities and indigenous nationalists alike. They also formed politically organised communities whose connections with China, particularly in the wake of the 1911 revolution, both sharpened the concerns of the Dutch regime and generated rival ideas about a modernity informed by Asian perspectives on agency and sovereignty rather than European notions of uplift and progress.

In Chapter Eight, Henk Schulte Nordholt provides further examples of how Asian consumers of photography in the Indies engaged with notions of modernity, civilisation and being governed that resonated with but were not constrained by European ethical directives. His essay examines how the cultivation of aspirations for a "modern" lifestyle, acquired through purchasing power rather than moral improvement, was an important component of the visual economy that literate, middle-class Javanese participated in during the early twentieth century. Much like the figures in Strassler's Chinese *contoh*, the imagery in school posters and magazine advertisements published by the Balai Pustaka (government press) encouraged Javanese of a certain class to celebrate their education, buy the latest consumer goods and use new amenities. The essay illuminates the gender-specific nature of the consumption patterns encouraged by these images, and the growing importance of the nuclear family as a site where "modern" Javanese identities were fashioned. In doing so, the findings corroborate recent studies on how consumption patterns defined the emergence of indigenous middle classes in other colonial contexts.[58]

Schulte Nordholt's essay resonates with Pattynama's observations on Indo-European family photographs in Chapter Five. Examining the "everyday" visual cultures of Indies people challenges the ideological narratives of the Ethical Policy articulated by European intellectuals and officials. While the sources employed in Chapter Eight are prescriptive, not autobiographi-

58 See, for example, Michael O. West, "The African middle class in Zimbabwe: Historical and contemporary perspectives," in *The Making of the Middle Class: Toward a Transnational History*, ed. A. Ricardo López and Barbara Weinstein (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012), 45-57 at 52.

cal, and furthermore endorsed by the colonial government, recent research using photographic ego documents supports Schulte Nordholt's argument that middle-class Javanese embraced historically novel forms of domestic consumption in the early twentieth century.[59]

Schulte Nordholt's essay retains the conceptual framework of "cultural citizenship" currently favoured among Dutch historians, but for the purposes of this essay his findings equally support a conceptualisation of middle-class Javanese as a community whom *ethici* presumed to govern, yet whose visions of an ethical future were not constrained by their ties to the colonial state. His chapter examines how visual sources were addressed to Java's middle classes, a group whose professional labour helped maintain Dutch rule even though access to the political domain was denied them. "Through educational programs and commercial advertisements" Java's middle classes were, Schulte Nordholt claims, "explicitly invited to abandon traditional habits and to become the new 'cultural citizens' of the colony." Significantly, his conclusion that the images of consumer lifestyles marketed to this group coincidentally "reinforced the interests of the colonial regime" has radical implications not only for current understandings of how indigenous people engaged with the Ethical Policy, but also for Indonesian nationalist historiography. His essay suggests that the notion of "modernity" cultivated among Java's middle classes did not cohere around radical visions of (an anti-colonial) nation but rather, around pursuit of a commodified lifestyle.

Even from the most militant quarters of anti-colonial resistance, among those who felt the repressive power of the ethical state first hand, the camera can reveal unexpected views of the Indies reform era. Rudolf Mrázek's closing essay in this volume (Chapter Nine) examines photographs made of and by dissidents as well as so-called "primitives" in and around the remote Boven Digoel penitentiary in Dutch New Guinea, a place where those who rebelled against the "ethical" colonial state were imprisoned, yet, as he points out, whose very existence helped define colonial "modernity" and "civilisation" from the margins. Boven Digoel was purpose-built in 1927 to house some 1300 of the thousands who participated in failed communist uprisings in Java and Sumatra. Despite the camp's geographic isolation, a market in photographs flourished at the site, one catered for by European sojourners (researchers, journalists, sailors) as well as inmates who provided "souvenirs" to fellow prisoners, guards and the occasional visitor. Rather

59 Susie Protschky, "Tea cups, cameras and family life: Picturing domesticity in elite European and Javanese family photographs from the Netherlands Indies, c. 1900-1942," *History of Photography* 36:1 (2012): 44-65.

than examine these photographs as straightforward documents of camp life, Mrázek reveals how they framed Boven Digoel as a site where civilisation and savagery were contrasted "in black and white". "From the camp spread the light. From the camp, at the edge of the modern world, darkness was confronted. Photography proved that this was the way the camp had been conceived in the first place, and how it functioned – as a clearing." In this managed space, Mrázek argues, Boven Digoel operated as a site of "concentrated modernity" intrinsic to the maintenance of "ethical" rule.

Photographs of the Papuans who lived in the forest surrounding the camp reveal a shared way of seeing that connected Asian inmates with the Europeans who worked at or visited the camp. Combatants on both sides of a political conflict over whose vision of modernity (colonial, communist, nationalist) would prevail to determine the future of the Indies were united in their fascination for a people whom they deemed wild and primitive. "To snap a shot of the Papuans was empowering for both the captives and the captors. It also paid well." Prisoners thereby upheld the ethnographically-informed orders of civilisation that underpinned the Dutch regime's ethicism. In keeping to the narrow range of representations that were permitted in Boven Digoel, then, inmates became more firmly trapped, deprived of their liberty *and* locked into a colonial way of seeing. That confinement of vision persisted into the postcolonial period, when survivors of the camp remained stigmatised in Indonesian society.

The essays on photography in this volume reveal both the ideological power of the Ethical Policy *and* its impotence in capturing the replete life worlds and aspirations of Indies people in the early twentieth century. On the one hand, examining reform-era photographs (in their historical context as well as from postcolonial positions) illuminates the broad penetration of the intellectual assumptions underpinning the Ethical Policy in diverse visual practices: among agents of the Dutch regime, its oftentimes ambivalent allies, as well as its political prisoners. On the other hand, photographs from the "ethical" period also deny, subvert and disregard the highest ideals of the policy. They reveal the violence of thought and action that sometimes underpinned implementation of the reforms, as well as contemporary European blindness to those injustices. In many instances, photographs also expose the irrelevance of the Ethical Policy to the everyday lives, self-definitions and aspirations of Indies peoples. Even when the rhetoric of progress was common to *ethici* and those whom they presumed to govern – employing contested tropes like "modernity", "civilisation" and "citizenship" – the strategies for achieving these positions were given photographic expressions that differed from textual discourses

on the Ethical Policy, and that varied between photographers, their subjects, and their audiences.

The essays here decentre the governing spectator from understandings of the Ethical Policy by paying heed to the "margins of excess" in officials' photographic works, as well as examining how the governed of the Indies – especially Asian communities – made photographers, subjects and spectators of themselves, on their own terms. In doing so, the essays here re-envision the "ethical" period in late-colonial Indonesia as more than the last best attempt of Dutch liberal imperialists to maintain a colony for the Netherlands, or as a trigger for Indonesian nationalists to seize the colonial developmentalist agenda and redress the political failures of the reforms. In bringing the governors and the governed of the Indies within a common visual-cultural field, *Photography, Modernity and the Governed in Late-colonial Indonesia* illuminates how photography offered unique opportunities for historical agency among a growing portion of the Indies population in the early twentieth century.

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2 Ethical policies in moving pictures

The films of J.C. Lamster

Jean Gelman Taylor

The ethical course in colonial policy

There were as many dimensions to the Ethical Policy as there were proponents. Indeed it was a complex of ideas, a set of related policies characterising a thought world. The term "Ethical Policy" is peculiarly associated with Pieter Brooshooft (1845-1921), whose booklet by that name was published in Amsterdam in 1901.[1] In it Brooshooft outlined a colonial policy whose guiding principles should be: separation of the colony's finances and governance from the Netherlands; primacy of indigenous interests in all policy formulation; Indies government management of the economy; increased numbers of Western-educated Javanese in the bureaucracy; and greater delegation of responsibility to indigenous officials.

These were not new principles growing out of a novel analysis, but rather the drawing together of a cluster of ideas, grievances and demands stretching back many years. Indeed, Rob Nieuwenhuys identifies frank criticism of Dutch administration as *the* enduring characteristic of Dutch writing on the archipelago.[2] From the middle of the nineteenth century, critics focused on the colonial economy and repressive character of the Indies government. Van den Bosch's economic measures, introduced in 1830 for increasing agricultural production, exports and profits for the Netherlands, had been in place for two decades,[3] allowing considered evaluation. Clergyman and journalist W.R. van Hoëvell concluded, from observations on

1 Pieter Brooshooft, *De ethische koers in de koloniale politiek* (Amsterdam: J.H. de Bussy, 1901).

2 Rob Nieuwenhuys, *Oost-Indische spiegel: Wat Nederlandse schrijvers en dichters over Indonesië hebben geschreven vanaf de eerste jaren der Compagnie tot op heden* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1978), 15.

3 These measures, known as the Cultivation System, were applied to sugar, coffee, tea, indigo, rubber and tobacco. Javanese and Madurese workers were required to pay their taxes by growing, processing and delivering to government agents fixed amounts of these crops raised on home village land or by 60 days' labour on plantations. On the Cultivation System, see C. Fasseur, *The Politics of Colonial Exploitation: Java, the Dutch, and the Cultivation System* (Ithaca: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1992); and R.E. Elson, *Village Java under the Cultivation System, 1830-1870* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1994). Johannes van den Bosch was Governor-General of the Indies from 1830 to 1834.

his travels through Java, that the Cultivation System burdened Javanese farmers with long working hours and heavy taxes.[4] He became a constant critic of colonial management in the Indies and subsequently in the Dutch Parliament.

Van Hoëvell and Multatuli (Eduard Douwes Dekker, 1820-1887) figure prominently in accounts of the nineteenth-century colony, but lesser known critics also petitioned the colonial administration for change. Lawyer Pelgrom Charles Ardesch (1800-1852), for instance, demanded freedom of the press, an end to autocratic forms of government, reform of the Indies currency, cancellation of the Netherlands Trading Company's monopoly on trade and shipping between colony and the Netherlands, and abolition of slavery in 1848.[5] Nieuwenhuys says of government official L. Vitalis that his pamphlet, *De invoering, werking en gebreken van het stelsel van kultures op Java* (*The Introduction, Workings and Shortcomings of the Agricultural System in Java*), published in 1851, carried a much stronger condemnation of the colonial government's economic policies than the famous (and infamous) fictionalised account by Multatuli in his *Max Havelaar of de koffij-veilingen der Nederlandsche Handel Maatschappij* (*Max Havelaar or the Coffee Auctions of the Netherlands Trading Company*, 1860).[6]

The foundations of the Ethical Policy lay in the Netherlands too. In 1865, for instance, the pioneering professor of Dutch national history, Robert Fruin (1823-99), argued that profits earned from the Cultivation System in the Indies should be invested in the colony as a matter of justice and duty of the coloniser.[7] From 1879 the Anti-Revolutionary Party had "moral duty" to the colonised as a plank in its political platform. It was this party's success

4 Van Hoëvell (1812-1879) had oversight of Malay and Dutch speaking congregations of the Dutch Reformed Church in Batavia from 1836 to 1848. He was active in the intellectual life of Batavia as founder (1841) and editor of the periodical *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië* and as a member of the Batavian Academy for Arts and Sciences. The Indies government obliged him to repatriate in 1848.

5 Ardesch was president of Batavia's Court of Justice and later of Semarang's. The *Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij* was founded by royal decree in 1824 in the Netherlands as a private company to finance trade and shipping with the colony. Ardesch's call for the abolition of slavery referred to slave-owning by Indonesians. The Netherlands Indies government banned Europeans from owning and trading in slaves in 1819 and Indonesians from ownership in 1861. See Ulba Bosma and Remco Raben, *Being "Dutch" in the Indies: A History of Creolisation and Empire, 1500-1920* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008), 199-200, on the "May troubles of 1848" in Batavia.

6 Nieuwenhuys, *Oost-Indische spiegel*.

7 Robert Fruin, "Nederland's rechten en verplichtingen ten opzichte van Indië" (Netherlands Rights and Duties in Relation to the Indies), *De Gids*, 1865.

in the 1901 elections that installed the Netherlands' duty to the Indies as official government policy.[8]

Brooshooft had read Multatuli before his arrival in Java in 1877 at the age of thirty-two. By that time, the colony was open to private enterprise and the Indies government had withdrawn from direct management of production of export crops, apart from coffee and sugar. In this Java, Brooshooft overturned prevailing wisdom. In his first ten years as a journalist he had supported the liberal, *laissez-faire* approach to the colonial economy and paid scant notice to the conditions of Java's labourers. But a dispute in 1885 between Javanese living on the Ciomas estate and its European owner led him to study legal enactments of previous colonial administrations. Research convinced Brooshooft that the Indies government was legally bound to side with the Javanese. To protect the Javanese against abuses from European commercial interests, Brooshooft now argued that the colonial government must resume close management of the economy, set fair wages for Javanese farmers, and regulate conditions for female, sick, elderly and child workers. As defender of the Javanese, the colonial government should also abolish the unpaid labour services that Javanese aristocrat-administrators claimed as their due from the populace under their jurisdiction.

Brooshooft distinguished himself from other critics and *ethici*, writes his biographer, Elsbeth Locher-Scholten,[9] in the quantity and quality of his writings that included newspaper articles, his three-part Memorandum on Conditions in the Indies, and his famous pamphlet. She points to the deep sense of justice and duty instilled in his childhood, to his Leiden law degree and to his journalist's procedure of methodical research and documentation to explain his conclusions. Brooshooft was not romantic in outlook. No protestations of love for the Javanese people drove him to argue, from 1891, that they should take centre place in all formulations of colonial policy. In Brooshooft's own words:

8 The *Anti-Revolutionaire Partij* was a political movement among members of the Dutch Reformed Church. It was founded by the theologian, journalist and politician Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), Prime Minister of the Netherlands 1901-1905. One of his daughters was a volunteer nurse in Yogyakarta in 1902.

9 Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, "Mr. P. Brooshooft, een biografische schets in koloniaal-ethisch perspektief", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 132:2-3 (1976): 306-349. See also the entry "Brooshooft, Pieter (1845-1921)" in *Biografisch woordenboek van Nederland*. "*Ethici*" is the name given to proponents of an ethical direction in colonial policy.

> We should not be sentimental, nor strive for "beautiful Insulinde", "girdles of emeralds"[10] or "warm hearts for our virtuous brown brother" who certainly is no more virtuous than the generality of mankind – and which is meaningless. What should compel us to discharge our duty to the Indies is the best of human inclinations, the sense of justice, the feeling that we, who have rendered the Javanese dependent on us, against their will, must give them the best of what we have, the noble impulse of the stronger to act justly by the weaker. Only when our colonial policy is imbued with this attitude will we be good masters of the Indies.[11]

Brooshooft's concern for the welfare of the indigenous did not derive from personal contact with villagers and farm labourers. Indeed, Brooshooft believed the mass of Javanese should be governed by well-educated, morally upright indigenous officials, and that the Dutch government and Dutch people should keep their distance. He appears to have shared the common attitudes and stereotypes of his day. His didactic play *Poor Java*, written (but never performed) in Holland in 1906, has stock characters of the exploited, gullible Javanese, crafty, fanatical Muslim village head and ethically guided, junior Dutch civil servant.[12]

Brooshooft spent the years 1877-85, 1887-95 and 1898-1903 in the Indies, with the exception, in this latter term, of four months in Amsterdam in 1900 where he wrote *De ethische koers*. From 1887 he was chief editor of *De Locomotief, Samarangsche Handels- en Advertentieblad* (*The Locomotive, Semarang's Commercial and Advertising Broadsheet*). Brooshooft built it up into Java's major paper, read by Dutch and Javanese government officials, private entrepreneurs, and a general readership literate in the Dutch language.

Brooshooft's Indies career, 1877-1903, coincides closely with the life of the Javanese Raden Ajeng Kartini (1879-1904). She was an ardent admirer of Multatuli.[13] Her correspondence with a circle of *ethici* prominent in the

10 The expression was from Multatuli and the closing page of *Max Havelaar*.

11 Quoted by L. Jeroen Touwen, "Paternalisme en protest. Ethische Politiek en nationalisme in Nederlands-Indië, 1900-1942," *Leidschrift* 15:3 (2000): 72, my translation.

12 The Rotterdam production of *Arm Java* was cancelled, as was another of Brooshooft's plays, *Belast* (*Over-taxed*): Locher-Scholten, "Mr. P. Brooshooft," 343. In this, Brooshooft mirrored the fate of an earlier Indies reformer, Dirk van Hoogendorp (1761-1822). His play, *Kraspoekoel of de slavernij* (*Harsh Blows or Slavery*), was fated to be read rather than performed after former Indies officials forced its closure on opening night in The Hague.

13 Jean Gelman Taylor, "Een gedeelde mentale wereld: Multatuli en Kartini," in *De minotaurus onzer zeden: Multatuli als heraut van het feminisme*, ed. Myriam Everard and Ulla Jansz (Amsterdam: Aksant Press, 2010), 147-166.

colonial administration demonstrates the reach and stimulus of reforming ideas.[14] She, too, saw protection and advancement of the indigenous population as the first duty of the Indies government, and she came down on the side of *ethici*, such as J.H. Abendanon (1852-1925), who advocated association between the Dutch and a Western-educated Javanese elite. While some *ethici* held the view that "Easterners" were so culturally different they could never engage with Western culture and therefore merited protection by the Dutch from the forces of Western modernity, Kartini saw Western-style education as the key to progress for the indigenous.

Many *ethici* saw in Kartini the realisation of their ideals. Their supporters funded schools for Javanese girls in her honour. But they were not receptive to her compatriots, whose goals were autonomy or complete independence. The future, as *ethici* of all strands saw it, was a long period of colonial oversight and guided development, culminating in transformation of the colony into an independent province within a greater Kingdom of the Netherlands. Jeroen Touwen points out that the nationalist movement emerged in the very period when the Ethical Policy guided colonial administration.[15] However, ethically guided officials did not consult with nationalists in designing schemes for raising indigenous welfare or for accelerating promotion of Western-educated Indonesians into the senior ranks of the colony's administrative services.

Ethici supported the "military expeditions" being prosecuted across the archipelago over the years 1870-1914. These wars, which brought all of present-day Indonesia into one political unit under Dutch control, were justified as the necessary precondition for imposing rule of law, ending the "tyranny" of indigenous chiefs and Islamic leaders, and introducing rational, practical measures to raise the living standards of the indigenous. Increased tensions in the Indies and the dominance of more conservative politicians in the Netherlands and Netherlands Indies in the 1930s led Touwen to confine the actual period when the agenda of the *ethici* informed colonial policy-

14 *Door duisternis tot licht: Gedachten over en voor het Javaansche volk* (*From Darkness into Light: Reflections on and for the Javanese People*) (The Hague: Luctor et Emergo, 1911), is a collection of letters Kartini wrote to Dutch acquaintances between 1899 and 1904, edited by J.H. Abendanon, director of native education and industry from 1900 to 1905. The phrase "from darkness into light" is Kartini's own. A complete edition of Kartini's letters to the Abendanon family was edited by F.G.P. Jaquet as *Brieven aan mevrouw R.M. Abendanon-Mandri en haar echtgenoot* (Dordrecht: Foris, 1987). Kartini's younger sisters sustained an intimate and intellectual relationship with the Abendanon family over another 26 years following her early death: see *Realizing the Dream of R.A. Kartini: Her Sisters' Letters from Colonial Java*, transl. and ed. Joost Coté (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008).

15 Touwen, "Paternalisme en protest," 86.

making to the years 1900-20, although the policy itself was not formally abandoned before World War II.[16]

Photograph and moving picture as records of the Indies

Ethical social engineering and military campaigns took place in the age of the camera. Photographers followed regiments of the colonial army,[17] as Paul Bijl demonstrates in Chapter Four. Masses of archival photographs of the Aceh wars and the assaults on Lombok and Toraja lands govern perceptions and shape historical analysis.[18] So it is important to state for the record the limitations of visual evidence imposed by the technological capacities of the early camera. Cameras were large and unwieldy, had to be mounted on tripods, and required long minutes for exposure. There are no candid photographs in this evidential form. Scenes and groups are staged, artificial, a fleeting moment fixed, the actors brought to pose before the camera, not caught by chance. Evolving camera technology and the spread of the handheld camera in the Indies after 1900 generated a huge number of images on all manner of topics. Reproduced in newspapers and books, on postcards, assembled in private albums or displayed on walls, they far surpassed the historical potential of the portrait and sketch.

The power of photographic recording – in its scientific, symbolic and propaganda aspects – was early recognised by the Indies government. Already in 1841 it commissioned photographs of Java's antiquities that were being prised loose from their cover of vegetation by amateur archaeologists. Here was the colonial government in its dignity as preserver of the ancient heritage of the colonised. Later the camera would photograph the new railway lines and docks, plantations, factories, city trams, offices, banks, hospitals, government buildings, schools, street lighting and public toilets. The camera also preserved a record of the indigenous workforce whose labour made the translation of Western inventions into the colony possible.

16 Ibid., 91.

17 The *Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger* (KNIL, Royal Netherlands East Indies Army) was founded by royal decree in 1830 and recruited from Dutch and Indonesian communities.

18 The well-known photographs from the Aceh wars have shaped academic and popular conceptions of Acehnese history and society. The extensive photographic archive from Aceh, however, covers many more subjects, and is a valuable source on the region's social, cultural and political developments between 1874 and 1940: see Jean Gelman Taylor, "Aceh Photo Narratives," in *Mapping the Acehnese Past*, ed. Michael Feener, Patrick Daly and Anthony Reid (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2011), 199-239.

In 1857 the first photographic studio opened in Batavia, and was soon followed by studios across the archipelago staffed by Eurasians, Chinese and Javanese.[19] The professional photographer recorded individuals and family groupings, and private as well as public moments in the life of the colony. The small Kodak camera, patented in 1895, swiftly reached the colony and private hands. From 1912 there is, too, a record of the Indies and Indies peoples from the moving camera.

The first showing of animated photographs projected onto a screen in a darkened venue to a paying audience took place late in 1895 in Paris. Early commentators emphasised how lifelike the moving images were: the women filmed leaving Auguste Lumière's studio were perceived as "real" in an unreal world that had neither colour nor sound. From the first, those producing motion pictures were conscious of film's potential to document and preserve scenes from daily life while narrating a story for popular entertainment. Lumière's cameraman, Boleslaw Matuszewski, published *La photographie animée* in which, as early as 1898, he called for the establishment of a film archive and proposed using it for science and education.[20] Documentaries date from the early 1900s. From 1911 comes the newsreel, which covered wars, new inventions and ceremonial events, and brought scenes of far-off places to cinema audiences well before the era of mass tourism.

Early film screenings were accompanied by an explanatory commentary read from a script by a cinema employee or by words inserted between scenes to be read by the viewers. At first films were very short, and they recorded actual people in outdoors settings. Later, when lighting allowed filming indoors, professional actors drawn from vaudeville and theatre replaced random people. By World War I, films were a major source of entertainment and information, and they were screened in purpose-built "picture palaces". Robert Dixon places moving pictures within a context of proliferating new media of representation that included lantern-slide lectures, photographic exhibitions, advertisements, pictures in newspapers, illustrated books and radio broadcasts. He characterises these new tools of visual technology and world fairs as elements of an international modernity.[21]

19 See Karen Strassler, *Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and National Modernity in Java* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), and Gerrit Knaap, *Cephas, Yogyakarta: Photography in the Service of the Sultan* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1999).

20 Colin Harding and Simon Popple, *In the Kingdom of Shadows: A Companion to Early Cinema* (New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996), 19.

21 Robert Dixon, *Photography, Early Cinema and Colonial Modernity* (London: Anthem Press, 2012), xvii.

The scenes of daily life filmed by J.C. Lamster between March 1912 and March 1913 in Java and Bali, and screened in public cinemas in the Netherlands from April 1915, date from the early beginnings of moving picture technology. They are clear evidence of recognition of the power of the motion picture, its capacity for instruction, and the producer's potential to control viewers' reception through commentary and text interspersed between frames. The Lamster films belong, therefore, to the history of cinema in the Netherlands.

The films were commissioned in 1911 by directors of the Colonial Institute founded in Amsterdam one year earlier. Holland's (and the world's) first colonial museum had been established in Haarlem in 1871 to support economic exploitation of the Indies. The colony had just been opened to private entrepreneurs the previous year. This new era of economic exploitation rested upon research on the colony's crops, soils, minerals and forests. By 1910 a bigger institution was needed to make room for the Colonial Museum's growing collection of specimens and to accommodate the new interest in collecting and researching ethnographic material that would serve Ethical Policy projects.[22]

The Institute's directors employed the new visual technology of moving pictures as a tool to recruit cultured men with university qualifications that the new ethical agenda in the Indies demanded. Moving pictures of daily life in the colony would inform and attract the engineers, surveyors, accountants, botanists, soil scientists, veterinarians and medical doctors who would make better management of Indies natural and human resources possible, and who would service the growing number of European career personnel and their families resident in the colony. Professionals and scientists would underpin colonial authority and implement government policies. The Lamster films, therefore, also belong to the history of the ethical period.

In 1911, when Lamster was commissioned to lead the film project, the *ethici's* principles and programs had been official policy in the Indies for a decade. Autonomy, debt of honour, pacification, irrigation works, education, uplift and a role for Christian missionaries in the distant, non-Muslim reaches of the archipelago were established goals in both official discourse and action. Government functions were expanding in nature in the ever-widening territory under direct control. Modern tools of empire – railways, bridges, telegraph, census counts, mass vaccinations and the like – demanded modern skills. The calibre of recruits is a long-standing

22 Janneke van Dijk, Jaap de Jonge and Nico de Klerk, ed., *J.C. Lamster, een vroege filmer in Nederlands-Indië* (Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2010), 20-22.

issue in histories of the Dutch in the archipelago, from Jan Pieterszoon Coen's withering criticisms in 1622 of the soldiers, sailors and clerks engaged by the VOC[23] to the activist *ethici* lobby of retired colonial officials in The Hague in the early 1900s.

Johann Christian Lamster

Johann Christian Lamster (1872-1954) was the nominee of J.B. van Heutsz, commanding general of the Aceh wars and governor-general of the Indies from 1904 to 1909. Lamster had enlisted in the army in the Netherlands as a teenager from a large family that had lost its breadwinner. The years he spent in the Indonesian archipelago, 1895-1911, 1912-24, were those when Brooshooft's influence was at its greatest. Lamster arrived in Java in 1895 with the rank of second lieutenant and was posted to Aceh in 1896. He served under Van Heutsz in the assault on Pidie of 1898, and was wounded and decorated for bravery in 1899. He transferred to the Topographical Service in 1902 (then under the Department of War in Batavia). In the course of his duties he crisscrossed Java, acquiring a profound knowledge of the island, fluency in Malay and Javanese, and a reputation for being able to interact easily with Indonesians. His marriage in 1903 to Johanna Theodora van Berckel inducted him into the colony's Eurasian society with its kin ties into both the European and Javanese communities. It was during his furlough year in the Netherlands in 1911 that he received his new appointment.

Lamster had made extensive use of the camera in his professional and personal life in the Indies. To understand the powers and limits of the moving camera and film processing, he spent several months at the Pathé studios in France[24] and acquired the services of Octave Collet as camera operator.[25] Lamster's brief was to record the daily life of the Dutch and the "Natives" across the archipelago, and to film agricultural industries,

23 VOC stands for the *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (United East Indies Company) that pioneered Dutch trading, settlement and control of Indonesian peoples and territory between 1602 and 1799.

24 The Pathé brothers were world leaders in film equipment, film production and distribution. They invested in research to improve studio cameras and film and to synchronise film with gramophone recordings. The company was the inventor of the newsreel as a visual almanac of newsworthy events.

25 Collet (1876-1943) later published *Terre et peuples de Sumatra* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1925) in which 180 of his plates accompanied his text on the geography, peoples and cultures of the island. It was reviewed in the *American Anthropologist* 30:1 (1928): 141-146.

factories, transport hubs, towns and villages, and indigenous arts and crafts. He established his base in Sukabumi in west Java. There he installed his family, his team of European and indigenous staff, and his film-processing studio.

The record Lamster produced was shaped, in part, by the camera technology of his day and Indonesia's moist climate. The workday was based around the camera. Filming could only be done outdoors and in morning hours for the best light. Lamster's camera was fixed on a tripod. Bringing individuals such as craftswomen and dancers to perform in a confined space before the extraordinary appearance of camera crew and equipment was dependent on Lamster's skills in people management, communication, establishment of trust and persuasion. In those documentaries filmed at worksites, in KNIL barracks and in prison, consent, of course, was the prerogative of the Europeans in charge, not the indigenous workers, soldiers, soldiers' wives or prisoners. In some cases, when Lamster had the camera mounted on a car or placed at spots in a busy street, he obtained shots of both indigenous and European without the prior consent of either group or conformity to his "stage directions". We see Indonesians and Europeans issuing from buildings, being startled by the camera, fleeing it, or drawn to it to ensure their faces and actions are caught in its lens.

The record Lamster produced was also shaped by editing. The films that were shown to audiences in the Netherlands were edited by Colonial Institute staff to meet the board's requirements. Title pages were inserted within each documentary to announce the scenes and explain them. Lamster had trained the camera on individual scenes for the minutes necessary to accommodate the running commentary that was written and read by employees of the Colonial Institute. The typed scripts made for a uniformity of exposition. Readers, who were "old Indies hands", were cautioned not to interpolate their own explanations. We do not know how closely the typescripts mirrored Lamster's original conception. Nor can we establish what viewers derived for, like readers, audience members reacted individually to what they saw. In 1918 Lamster's films were reviewed at the Colonial Institute and stills inserted to fill in perceived gaps in the information. By 1923 they were considered out of date in content and form, and consigned to storage.

The first public screening took place in a cinema in The Hague. Queen Wilhelmina, Queen Mother Emma and Prince Hendrik attended, as did members of the cabinet and dignitaries such as Van Heutsz. The publicity generated created pressure for the films to be shown to wider audiences in the cinemas then springing up in the Netherlands. This was initially

resisted by the Colonial Institute's board. They insisted the films were for instruction, not entertainment, and limited viewings to select audiences of potential Indies recruits with the official script readers in attendance. Because the films' prime function was to convey a sense of life in the colony to Dutch people who had never been there, they were not screened in the Indies. Nevertheless, Lamster's films belong to the early history of Indonesian cinema, for Indonesian men and women performed before his camera, and Indonesians were part of his film production crew.

Lamster made approximately 60 documentaries, each of several minutes' duration. Some of these were restored in the 1970s by the Netherlands Film Institute. In 1995, the photojournalist Vincent Monnikendam released a 90-minute movie from approximately 200 films shot in the Indies between 1912 and 1933. It included some clips from Lamster's *oeuvre*. He called it *Moeder Dao, de schildpadgelijkende* (*Turtle-like Mother Dao*).[26] In harmony with his time, Monnikendam's overarching narrative of the Dutch in Indonesia was strongly anti-colonial. His selections from those old films emphasised the arrogance of the coloniser and conveyed Monnikendam's sense of how Indonesians might have perceived the Dutch in their midst. The resulting view in *Moeder Dao* of the Dutch colonial era is quite at variance with Lamster's own assessment of Dutch rule and role in the Indies. He was proud of what the Dutch had accomplished there, and he was to regret Japanese and Republican rule as undoing what he saw as even-handed co-operation between white and brown.[27]

The Royal Tropical Institute[28] showed some of Lamster's films in its semi-permanent exhibition titled "To the East! The Netherlands Indies, A Colonial Past", and in 2010 it released fifteen of them on compact disk to accompany a book-length study of the filmmaker. The restored films now have background music. Voice-over replaces the spoken commentary of Colonial Institute screenings. The films that I have examined are, therefore, many removes from Lamster's originals.[29]

26 In taking the title of a creation story from Nias, Monnikendam implies his documentary is an account of the creation of the Netherlands Indies.

27 J. van Dijk et al., *Lamster*, 72.

28 In 1950, following Indonesia's independence, the Colonial Institute was renamed the Royal Institute for the Tropics. Its mission statement identifies its goals as research into health, sustainable development, culture, and knowledge transfer in tropical regions of the world.

29 Typed transcripts of the authorised commentary read aloud during the screening of Lamster's films, and which are now delivered as voice-overs in the films released on CD-ROM, are in the KIT archives. Some of Lamster's films in their original format are also still in the archives and await further analysis and comparison with the films released on CD-ROM.

The Lamster films

Lamster's brief was to make documentaries of places and peoples from all regions of the colony in which the quotidian rather than the exotic or sensational should be paramount. Lamster was not able, within the allotted one-year period, to film throughout the archipelago. The documentaries available for scrutiny were filmed in the colonial cities of Batavia, Bogor and Bandung, in the royal cities of Surakarta and Yogyakarta, and in villages and a plantation whose locations are not identified. The location of the Bali scenes is not identified either. In them Balinese artisans, gamelan players and dancers perform for the camera. Bali's southern kingdoms had only been conquered four years before Lamster took his camera and film crew to the island. The Bali scenes and those from the "self-ruling" principalities on Java present the artistic heritage of the past, while the directly ruled areas of Java showcase a contemporary modernity of cogs and pistons, mass production, a native workforce accustomed to operating industrial machinery and pursuing a lifestyle determined by the Western clock and calendar.[30]

In 1912, Java was the key site for most of the schemes set in train by the ethical direction in colonial policy. Most Europeans working in the Indies lived in Java's towns. Scenes and topics in Lamster's documentaries from Dutch Java are, therefore, predictable. Into darkened cinemas in Holland came flickering images of Europeans "out and about" in Indies towns by car and pony cart, and of industrious natives in boiler rooms, dry docks and machine shops. In village and temple settings natives demonstrate traditional arts and rituals. There is the modern world that gathered in European and Indonesian, and there is the village world of times past in which no Europeans are visible.

Also invisible in the fifteen documentaries are Java's old and new elites. Neither the princely inhabitants of the *kratons* that provide the setting for dance performances, nor the aristocrat-administrators who headed *kabupatens* appear.[31] By contrast, we know these regents so well from hundreds

30 This association of modernity with territories directly administered by the Indies government and association of tradition with the principalities ruled by sultans is apparent in the choice of subjects by European and Chinese photographers and reinforced by indigenous and European photographers appointed by the royal courts. The private family albums of Yogyakarta-based Indonesian Chinese from the 1910s, however, narrate a history of modernising lifestyles that negate the concept of "two Javas": see Strassler, *Refracted Visions*, Chapter 1.

31 *Kraton* means royal residence. A *kabupaten* is an administrative unit within a province, headed by a *bupati* (Indonesian) or *regent* (Dutch-era term).

of still photographs they had taken of themselves in their distinctive, hybrid dress that clothed the upper body in Western shirt, tie, jacket and fob watch, and wrapped head and lower body in batik.[32] Instead, Lamster's moving camera shows us new Indonesian men – machinists, foremen, chauffeurs, a locomotive driver, a paramedic, veterinary science students – and a few new women represented by schoolteachers and high school students. We do not see representatives of Dutch might either, such as Governor-General A.W.F. Idenburg (r. 1909-16) or *residenten* (European heads of provinces). Instead, we see middle-class representatives of the modern Netherlands: Dutchmen who are scientists and schoolteachers, and a tourist. Dutchwomen are shown belonging to two worlds. At home, they keep house with a team of Javanese men and women assistants; they select fruits and vegetables from passing peddlers. In these scenes they wear the Dutch variant of Javanese female dress (*kain kebaya*), a white long-sleeved, fitted bodice and a batiked wrapped skirt falling to bare feet in slippers. When out travelling by car they wear European frocks, hats, shoes and stockings. The Dutchwoman in the colonial home appears a bossy and exacting employer, but the overall impression from the Lamster documentaries is that it is the indigenous and Eurasians who make the colony function on a daily basis.

Each of the documentaries on the compact disk has a dominant subject explored through several scenes. For discussion I have grouped the fifteen documentaries into five themes: European lifestyle; colonial education and health services; modern installations and indigenous workforce; colonial army and penitentiary rehabilitation; and indigenous lifestyles and culture.

Two documentaries respond to the Colonial Institute's goal of encouraging educated middle-class family men to seek careers in the Netherlands' overseas possessions. "The Lifestyle of Europeans in the Indies" opens with an Indies house in Batavia and indigenous street folk. Then the camera, mounted on a car, follows a European husband and wife as they motor through town to pick up friends, shop and visit a gallery for native handicrafts. Javanese attend them at every moment, their services barely acknowledged. A crowd of Dutch and Eurasian children pour out of a schoolyard into a street crowded with Indonesians and then push their way onto trams. Other scenes show Dutch children at home playing in a large garden. Their birds and pony are brought to the camera; male servants hover in the background.

32 For photographs of regents and their families see the KITLV Image Collection using keywords "indigenous administration", "indigenous administrators" and "Java" or specific cities.

The route in "Car Trip through Bandung" takes in its European suburb with clubhouse, church and park, mansions and more modest housing, then passes through the Chinese commercial quarter where billboards advertise Dutch products. Next, the camera goes to film the train station and the Bandung-East Java express. In the last scene a tourist from Hotel Homan travels by car into the countryside to see rice fields shimmering under water, fringed by jungle. He takes a pleasure barge that negotiates its way across a lake where Indonesian fishermen are casting their nets. At his destination the tourist watches two men demonstrate the Indonesian martial art form, *pencak silat*, while a group of seated *angklung* musicians shake their bamboo instruments.

The subjects of the other documentaries demonstrate the Ethical Policy in action. Expansion of Western-style education for Indonesians through government funding of schools and appointment of qualified teachers was a core element. Lamster presented the fruits of this policy in two ways. First, in "Native Veterinarian School in Buitenzorg [Bogor]", we see Dutch scientists in a public college offering specialised, tertiary training to indigenous (male) students. They are filmed examining the internal organs extracted from a buffalo carcass. Next students observe a veterinary surgeon as he treats a wounded animal, and they demonstrate for the camera how to prepare a horse for surgery by strapping it into a frame. Students take turns learning how to check the hooves of fidgety horses and how to harness, lead and calm them. In the last scene they study forage grasses. The combination of practical with academic training is an important principle of Western pedagogy, and one that prepared the college's graduates for careers in animal industries in the colony.

Leading members of the "ethical party" supported schooling for girls in single-sex institutions that would prepare them to run hygienic households efficiently, and become suitable partners in modern companionate marriages with Western-schooled indigenous men. In the Netherlands *ethici* raised funds for the "Kartini Schools" they opened in Java with both Dutch and Indonesian women teachers. Lamster demonstrates the flow-on effects of ethical education policy in his second film, "Girls' School in Bandung". He shows Dutch-educated indigenous women teachers who have established and staff their own private school, *Kaoetamaan Istri* (Housewives' Expertise), offering young indigenous girls a specialised curriculum in domestic science within a Javanese cultural context. Whereas male students of the government veterinary college wear Western suits and shoes, pupils of the private girls' school wear *kain kebaya* and they greet their teachers by squatting and crawling across the school's veranda to them. The voice-

over explains the form and significance of their *sembah* greeting. We see lessons in "housewives' skills": cookery, laundry, ironing, sewing and lace making. For the sewing lesson, a table is set up on one side for instruction in operation of a sewing machine, while dozens of girls, seated on mats on the ground, sew by hand. A teacher pushes a little girl to the ground to demonstrate to the camera, or perhaps to instil in the pupil, the deference expected of a junior receiving material and instruction from her superior.

The colonial government extended public health programs beyond city schools into villages. "Vaccination in the Village" records the visit of a vaccinator as a solemn, ceremonial occasion. Women walk to the clinic carrying infants on their left hip in a *slendang* (scarf secured over the shoulder). The pony cart bearing the vaccinator and his team materialises from the far horizon and stops at the village entrance that is festooned with banners. Male village dignitaries in batik head wrapper, sarong and jacket move forward to greet the vaccinator, who is dressed in colonial whites and a pith helmet. He approaches the clinic through a human avenue of honour, followed by an assistant who carries his medical bag and diverse attendants. On the clinic's veranda, the vaccinator removes his topee to reveal his Javanese batiked head wrapper and his own identity. Mothers file up to have their babies vaccinated as another Javanese official checks a list. Finally a group shot brings together mothers, infants and, behind them, a great crowd of male villagers and onlookers.

Three documentaries showcase the colony's transport systems and agricultural industry. These products of colonial investment, engineering and science are operated and maintained by an indigenous workforce. "In the Workyards of the State Rail at Bandung" Indonesian men oil and grease machinery, they file metal parts and check valves in the boiler room. Other men saw planks to build seats for passenger carriages and fittings for freight cars. An Indonesian drives a locomotive out of the train shed and then demonstrates reversing it into the shed again. The voice-over informs us these native workers are quiet, orderly and hardworking. At the end of the day, the railway workers merge into a street full of pedestrians, bicycles, pony carts and a few cars. The camera tells us that none shows any special deference or ostentatiously gives way to white men, although many appear conscious of the camera.

"Agave Fibre" shows the viewer the tasks allocated to men and women workers on a sisal plantation and factory. Men weed with hoes; women harvest the stalks and bundle them for collection and transport by men who drive buffalo-drawn drays or push wheeled carts along rail lines. Men operate the shredding machines. Women pull out the stringy fibres, wash

and beat them, and stack them on drying racks. They then carry the ropes in huge loads on their backs to the factory where men do the arduous tasks of compacting the ropes in a press and packaging them. Lamster's crew also filmed the work that goes into maintaining the seaworthiness of ocean liners in "Docking of a Ship in Tandjong Priok Harbour". We see indigenous wharf workers securing the ship in dry dock, scraping and cleaning its sides.

Implementation of the ethical movement's social welfare programs required pacified territory, imposition of law and order, and detention of anti-social subjects for rehabilitation through honest labour. In "The Netherlands Indies Army" we see uniformed infantry troops with bayonets practising marching drills to drum beat and going through obstacle courses. We see them in civilian clothes playing ball games. Ex-military man Lamster goes into the barracks and here his presentation of the family life of KNIL men contrasts strongly with that of the literature, popular and academic.[33] Where the latter portrays the barracks as teeming with camp followers and prostitutes, Lamster films well-groomed women lined up on the veranda cooking their men's meals on small braziers, as their neatly dressed, healthy children look on. We see the women in orderly file taking the prepared midday meal in containers to the soldiers, who eat together.

A number of remarkable scenes demonstrate the KNIL in action. We see soldiers setting up tents and cooking on bivouac. Some of the Indonesian soldiers dress as insurgents in turbans. After a display of Islamic praying, these men, "the enemy", armed with blunderbusses and curved swords, creep through the trees to make a surprise attack on the colonial troops to cries of "Allah". The voice-over informs us of their hope of paradise by killing a European, and that they call all colonial troops by the pejorative *kaffer*. KNIL troops effectively dispatch their attackers with rifles. Columns then attack a village hidden behind a protective hedge of thorny bamboo. A final scene in this documentary demonstrates how KNIL troops use makeshift rope bridges to ford rivers.

The voice-over in "Prison in Batavia" tells us that formerly convicted offenders performed hard labour, such as crushing stone into gravel for

33 Academic studies tend to analyse the women members of KNIL families as prostitutes. See for example John Ingleson, "Prostitution in Colonial Java," in *Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Indonesia: Essays in Honour of Professor J.D. Legge*, ed. David Chandler and Merle Ricklefs (Clayton: Monash Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986); and Liesbeth Hesselink, "Prostitution, a necessary evil, particularly in the colonies: Views on prostitution in the Netherlands Indies," in *Indonesian Women in Focus,* ed. Elsbeth Locher-Scholten and Anke Niehof (Dordrecht: Foris, 1997), 205-224. The short story writer Thérèse Hoven casts the *de facto* wife as a faithful concubine in "'t was maar een baboe'," *In sarong en kabaai* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1892), 201-223.

road-making, and we see a group at this work under guards. Other scenes demonstrate the new Ethical Policy concept of gaol as a site for rehabilitating inmates by teaching them skills that will allow them to be gainfully and respectably employed upon release. Some prisoners make barrels. Others are weaving large carrying baskets (the equivalent of today's cardboard boxes and plastic crates). Dozens crowd together around tables and sewing machines that have been brought into the prison yard before the camera to demonstrate their new tailoring skills. We see prisoners lining up for lunch rations, being inspected by prison wardens, and taking their evening bath in the river below the prison walls. A final scene shows a rehabilitated group who have completed their sentences leaving gaol.

In both documentaries on European residents in the Indies, Lamster filmed Europeans patronising traditional performance arts and handicraft production. Tourism and shopping are part of the modern, urban lifestyle. Ethical programs harnessed these middle-class pursuits to schemes to revive and maintain indigenous arts and crafts and provide gainful employment to village artisans and artists. We know from many passages in letters written by Raden Ajeng Kartini of her work with the Dutch association *Oost en West* (East and West) securing commissions for Jepara woodcarvers. Her sister Roekmini's ambition to study art education in the Netherlands was so that she could sponsor a revival of traditional crafts in the colony. We also know from these letters how infusion of outside interest, taste and money encouraged Javanese artists and artisans to experiment with new forms and styles.[34]

Accordingly, in addition to filming indigenous waged workers in railway yards and on plantations, Lamster filmed artisans in cottage industries in Java and Bali. A woman demonstrates spinning and weaving; the voice-over explains how she makes the intricate patterns. Here the camera is fixed steadily on a single individual, filming her from in front, then from the side. Separate scenes show groups of men carving ivory in Bali and the finished figurines. In another scene men seated on a raised platform carve in wood. A man punches designs into a leather *wayang* puppet in Yogyakarta. Lamster films palace art in "Wireng Dances in the Surakarta Kraton" and village arts of everyday in "Temple Offerings in Bali". Here women walk in single file to a temple balancing trays piled with fruits on their head. They then line up as a group for the camera to examine the artistry of food offerings in Balinese Hinduism. Young girls appear to perform a tea ceremony with

34 See, for example, Kartini's letters of 12 December 1902, 2 and 17 February 1903 and 9 March 1903 in *Brieven aan mevrouw R.M. Abendanon-Mandri*.

many false starts, apparent wrong moves, and giggles to the camera crew. A procession of men with parasols, gamelan instruments and a spitted pig passes through the split gate entrance to a temple (not shown). Two young girls dance.

Islam is associated in Lamster's documentaries with resistance (the staged fight between KNIL and jihadis), but also with the inner life of the majority indigenous community. He devotes "Muhammadan Observances" to showing individual and group religious devotions. For the first scene, a Muslim man has allowed Lamster to film him demonstrating Islamic prayer ritual. The setting is the rocky banks of a river, where he performs the ritual ablutions and then the body postures that accompany *salat* or prayer, repeating them four times. The next scene is in a crowded town on a Friday noon. Indonesian men and several Arabs, distinctive by their dress, thread their way through crowded streets to the mosque. It appears Lamster has obtained permission to film congregational prayers, not in the mosque itself, nor on its veranda, but in the mosque courtyard. We see tightly packed rows of men from behind as they stand, bow and kneel. The final scene shows men issuing from the mosque after the Friday sermon.

"Life of the Native in the Village" films villagers in their own environment, which is shown to be detached from the world of work sheds and disciplined labour. Villagers are miniscule beneath the huge trees among which they live. The first scenes take place on a riverbank and in the river itself. Men wash their ponies, small boys splash among their buffalo in the river, women rinse rice and cassava in its water, and wash clothes and bathe their babies in a shallow reach. In another scene men fan braziers where saté is roasting. They seem remote from the busy modernity we have previously viewed, yet even here colonial administration reaches into the village through its indigenous officials whom we see mounting and dismounting their ponies in front of the government outpost.

The Lamster films in perspective

For men considering a career in the Indies and taking a young family with them, Lamster's films must have answered many questions and been reassuring. Recruits could get an idea of what European suburbs looked like. These inhabitants of the Netherlands' narrow, multi-storeyed, attached townhouses might be tempted by the prospect of large Indies houses with verandas, each one set in park-like gardens with tall trees and potted plants. Household help seemed plentiful. Children could grow up outdoors in health

and freedom from the restraints imposed by close urban living. Houses bordered wide, straight, tree-lined streets. Lamster's films assured the recruits of urban amenities for all the family: churches, schools, department stores, social clubs, parks and many modes of transport from automobiles to trains, trams, bicycles and pony carts.

Candidates for middle and senior management jobs could see worksites, depots and docks fitted with modern machinery. If the indigenous workforce caused alarm on account of their scant clothing and sweaty bodies, there was the visual reassurance that direct supervision was the task of Eurasian junior managers and indigenous foremen who were fully clothed and clean. In the Lamster clips they inspect individual workers' performance, gesture commands, direct them to new tasks and check papers without reference to a higher, white authority. The prospective plantation company employee could recognise the hierarchy of workers and tasks, and be conscious of the distance between manual labourer and upper manager that depended on indigenous supervisory staff. The professional could view sterile laboratories and workplaces, and expect to be attended by a cadre of indigenous men in training and numerous office or menial staff.

The prospective applicants for Indies careers were also made aware of opportunities for refreshment and entertainment. There were hotels, scenic spots in a landscape of high mountains, lakes, forests and cultivated fields, guided tours, pleasure launches, rustic arts to watch and refined dance performances in the royal courts. Islamic ritual was different, but explainable and seemingly confined to specified places. Above all, there was security. Indigenous foes were easily defeated by a colonial army disciplined and unified into a single body through regular drills and inspections, and trained in the handling of modern weapons.

Recruits could see the Dutch presence as a modernising force. There was much to be proud of: the modern infrastructure; the public health services; the trained corps of indigenous medical staff; the schools; the careful attention to preserving and promoting native arts and crafts; the benevolent programs to rehabilitate the criminal elements of society; the diffusion of sound hygiene principles among indigenous girls who would one day be mothers. Streets are clean. The colony seems well run, progressing. All look healthy, well-fed. The Dutch seem to be a blessing for the Indies and Indies people. No dark clouds threaten. Aceh is in the past; nationalists are not yet on the horizon. These are general impressions created by the film team headed by an Aceh veteran.

If candidates being courted by the Colonial Institute or their wives turned to the colony's novelists for insight into colonial life they would have dis-

covered a very different picture. Those spacious Indies houses and grounds were inhabited by scheming Javanese housekeepers who made white men besotted through *guna-guna* (black arts, magic) and who slipped poisoned potions into their food when crossed. Native suburbs were places of last resort for poor whites, who had lost their foothold in European society, and for mixed-race children abandoned by white fathers and turned over to indolent native relatives. Gangs of young Eurasian men, the "Sinjos",[35] ran extortion rackets from native quarters and seduced Dutch girls of good families. Superstitious natives were prey to shamans. Men crazed by Islam filled their neighbours with hatred for whites and nurtured ambitions of martyrdom through *rampok* gangs of looters that attacked Europeans isolated on plantations in the interior.[36]

Columns in *De Locomotief* treated readers to stories of Europeans willingly "going native". They exposed corruption among government officials, Dutch and indigenous. They reported on hostile workers and plots to murder Christians, and lambasted China for seeking to open consulates in the colony to protect Chinese coolies from harsh working conditions on plantations. Indies reporters also carried news of government commissions of inquiry into declining welfare in the community as agricultural industries were exposed to fluctuations in world prices.[37]

Lamster's films – that is, the ones available to us on compact disk – show none of this. Lamster was not unknowing or blind. He spent 28 years in total in the colony in diverse careers that took him from Kalimantan to Papua. He married and raised his children in the Indies. He reached the rank of captain in the KNIL, after having served with indigenous soldiers in guerrilla units in Aceh. He travelled across the archipelago as an employee of the Topography and Forestry Services. Outside of work hours he made notes on the villages he visited, and kept diaries of conversations he had with Indonesians. He taught surveying, water management and geography at the Queen Wilhelmina technical high school in Batavia, and was curator of collections on Bali, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and New Guinea at the Batavian Academy of Arts and Sciences. On repatriation he worked for the Colonial Institute, where he made a descriptive inventory of its Indies collections.

35 *Sinjo* was a Malay variant of the Portuguese *Senhor*.

36 See, for example, P.A. Daum, *Goena-Goena, een geschiedenis van stille kracht* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1964), first published 1887; Annie Foore, *Indische huwelijken* (Rotterdam: D. Bolle, 1895); Thérèse Hoven, *In sarong en kabaai* (Amsterdam: L.J. Veen, 1892); and N. Marie C. Sloot, *De familie van den Resident* (Schiedam: H.A.M. Roelants, 3rd ed., n.d.).

37 *De Locomotief, Semarangsche Handels- en Advertentieblad*, 1864-1940 issues, Switzerland: Inter Documentation Company, KITLV Library microform.

He wrote books on Java, Bali, Papua and Nias in which he described each region's geography, climate, ethnic groups, their arts, religion, clothing, transport and ways of earning a living, and recorded in them questions he had asked of Indonesians he engaged in conversation and the answers they gave him.[38]

This man, then, living in diverse regions of the archipelago, exposed to a great variety of Indonesians, Eurasians and Europeans in the course of his working and domestic life and to all the negatives of poverty, ignorance, corruption and injustices, saw ethical policies as beneficial to the Indies and Indies peoples. His camera filmed a world in which everyone knew their place in a benevolent order that brought the fruits of modernisation while respecting the culture of past eras. In 1912 Lamster seems to have filmed a new era of peace and plenty. When he left the Indies for the last time in 1924, Lamster had seen the establishment of the *Volksraad* (People's Council), which embodied his associationist ideal of co-operation between white and brown within a Dutch superstructure. In 1924, only the communists had substituted Indonesia for Indies in their party's title.[39] Sukarno's National Party of Indonesia was yet to come.

Camera Ethica

Can we see Indonesians as part of the ethical project in Lamster's documentaries? His camera records indigenous men who drive cars and locomotives, who work in machine shops. We know the opening of such skills and jobs to the indigenous was a matter of necessity. Native labour was cheap compared to importing workers from the Netherlands. The European segment in the colony never exceeded 0.4 per cent of the total population. By choosing to film Indonesians at work, however, Lamster establishes their competence. His camera reminds us that individuals have to be willing to learn new skills, and that in indigenous society, where there was a discourse of contempt for Europeans and those associating with them, choosing to work within a European sphere took courage as well as curiosity and ambition.

Individuals employed in factories, offices and Dutch households were the diffusers of modernity to relatives in colonial towns and villages. An

38 See, for example, his volumes *Java*, *Bali* and *Indië, gevende eene beschrijving van de inheemsche bevolking van Nederlandsch-Indië en van hare beschaving*, published by the Droste Cocoa and Chocolate Manufactory (a financial sponsor of publications on the Indies) in Haarlem in 1928.

39 The *Perserikatan Komunis di Hindia*, formed in May 1920, changed its name to *Partai Komunis Indonesia* in 1924.

indigenous family posted to the Moluccas in the 1920s, for example, chose to include a picture of their sewing machine in their photograph album.[40] The housewife sits at a table operating it. Other photographs in their album show the items they have purchased for their dining room, which include a dresser, clock and coffee pot, framed pictures and a mirror. Such photographs are evidence that Indonesians were not just objects of ethical directives for Indies society, but participants in it and aspirants for a Dutch middle-class lifestyle.[41]

Viewers bring their own interpretations to these old films of a colonial past. The photojournalist Monnikendam was struck by the hauteur of the Dutch men and women he saw. The historian, on the other hand, might ask if their indigenous staff understood social distancing as a natural entitlement of those in higher ranks. Certainly such was the behaviour of their own upper classes and, to a lesser degree, of foremen at their place of work. Thirteen years earlier, Kartini had described in detail the rules of etiquette governing relations between ranks and generations, and the general disapprobation she encountered in releasing (her word) her younger brothers and sisters from observing such rules in their dealings with herself.[42] Lamster filmed a Sundanese school for girls called *Kaoetamaan Istri*. Possibly it was the school established by west Java's Raden Dewi Sartika (1884-1947) in 1904 and to which she gave the name *Kaoetamaan Istri* in 1910.[43] She adapted elements of the Dutch public school curriculum for her pupils, but still required them to observe customary protocols of politeness, including crawling across the floor to greet their superiors, which Lamster captured on camera.

What is striking in the street scenes in Lamster's films is the lack of servility toward Europeans on the part of Indonesians. It gives a different perspective on stereotypes of colonial relationships, one that is reinforced by Annelieke Dirks' research into welfare programs for delinquent youth in Java in the 1920s. She found letters addressed to the Governor-General of

40 KITLV Images Collection, Album 503, Image 80734. The family names and provenance of the album are unknown. On the sewing machine as an example of diffusion and uptake of technology, see Jean Gelman Taylor, "The sewing machine in colonial-era photographs: A record from Dutch Indonesia," *Modern Asian Studies* 46:1 (2012): 71-95.

41 Henk Schulte Nordholt argues that colonial rule was sustained by this new middle class who wanted a modern Dutch lifestyle and altered their behaviour (in terms of education, jobs and how they spent their time) to get it: "Onafhankelijkheid of moderniteit? Een geïllustreerde hypothese," in *Het koloniale beschavingsoffensief: Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië*, ed. Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009), 105-120. Chapter Seven of this volume is a revised and updated version of this essay.

42 Raden Ajeng Kartini, letter of 25 May 1899, *On Feminism and Nationalism: Letters to Stella Zeehandelaar, 1899-1903*, transl. and ed. Joost Coté. (Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, 1995).

43 There were nine of these schools in west Java by 1912.

the Indies by Javanese parents protesting the sentencing of their children to reformatories, promising to supervise them at home strictly so they did not re-offend against society. These are letters from people who had to hire the services of a clerk who could write Malay in Latin letters. These Javanese petitioners were socially and financially at the bottom of the colonial pyramid, yet felt they had the right to object to decisions of a Dutch judge and to complain against injustice to the highest authority in the colony.[44] Lamster's camera, fixed to a moving car, captures an unrehearsed fact of colonial life, meaningful *to us* because of its challenge to our received ideas of social relations within colonies. Peter Burke would characterise this as an instance of the "mute testimony" of images. Historians gain information from images that their creators did not know they were imparting.[45]

The Indonesians who performed for Lamster's camera were people who have left no written records of their own. In being brought before the camera they had to follow directions on keeping within the camera's lens. There had to be co-operation, perhaps a desire to be on film. Lamster wanted his documentaries to be screened in the Indies, so that the filmed might have an opportunity of observing themselves, and the opportunity for gaining an overall view of the colony, its modern transformation, its diversity and its cherishing of the past. Was the man demonstrating Muslim prayer ritual in the documentary "Muhammadan Observances" engaging in his own "ethical project" of instructing the Dutch? Did the women weavers and woodcarvers see themselves as experts, expounding to an unknowing but interested Dutch audience their own skills and craft traditions? Did dancers in Bali and Java feel pride in their artistry and cultural inheritance? Did they see themselves as teachers in this context? The camera can only show the performance, not what the performers thought. But we can surmise that those willing to participate in Lamster's filming perceived some sort of advantage from this joint enterprise.

Achmad Djajadiningrat, as holder of the colony's highest office but one, campaigned for that independence of action in the colony and indigenous leadership that Brooshooft had espoused.[46] His experiences, which he recorded in Dutch and Malay language editions of his memoirs, suggest that

44 Annelieke Dirks, "For the Youth: Juvenile Delinquency, Colonial Civil Society and the Late Colonial State in the Netherlands Indies, 1872-1942" (PhD diss., Leiden University, 2011), chapter 5.

45 Peter Burke, *Eye-Witnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (London: Reaktion, 2001), 14, 188.

46 In 1913 all government positions in the colony, save that of Governor-General, were opened to qualified indigenous civil servants, although in practice most indigenous civil servants found themselves up against a glass ceiling early in their careers.

it took courage to hitch one's fortunes to the Dutch.[47] Kartini wrote feelingly of racial slights in the schoolroom and in colonial gatherings, confirming in some measure Monnikendam's judgement. Her sisters write to their Dutch *ethici* friends of their frustration that it was the Dutch who spoke for the natives. In the "Call to Young Java", signed by Roekmini, Kartinah and Soematri in 1908, we find:

> Several newspapers, especially *The Locomotive*, often contain articles that warmly advocate our cause, but most of them are by Europeans, and although they are Europeans who wish us well, still they are not written by Javanese.
> Aren't there enough among us who could say this and take up the cause of our people? So, why don't they?[48]

Soematri's husband, Achmad Sosrohadikoesoemo, confides his irritation at how slow change was in coming for men like him, equipped with Western education and natural talent. But he was closer to the *ethici* when he wrote that self-rule for the colony would only be feasible in another 50 years. He expressed this view in 1914.[49] Sukarno was to make the demand for immediate, full independence just thirteen years later with the founding of the *Partai Nasional Indonesia* in 1927.

Comparing the small Lamster production of moving pictures with the hundreds of thousands of still photographs in the archives of the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) and the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), we see in both moving and still pictures landscapes, train stations, factories and plantations. The still photo archive is richer in pictures of individuals and family groups and of domestic interiors. There is a greater wealth of material culture in photographs that were taken indoors. In them is evidence of the penetration into the colonial

47 Pangeran Aria Achmad Djajadiningrat (1877-1943), son of an ancient Sundanese family, had a distinguished career in the colonial civil service after he graduated from the Dutch academic high school (*Hogere Burger School*, HBS) in Batavia. He was regent of Serang, member of many government commissions, member of the *Volksraad*, president of the Council of the Indies, and Indies' representative to the League of Nations. In his memoir, *Herinneringen van Pangeran Aria Achmad Djajadiningrat* (Amsterdam and Batavia: Kolff, 1936), he recounts the hostility and scorn he experienced from teachers and fellow pupils in the *pesantren* (Islamic school) he was enrolled in as a young child. On Djajadiningrat and Kartini, see Jean Gelman Taylor, "Kartini in her historical context," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 145:2-3 (1989): 295-307.

48 Roekmini sent a copy of the "Call" to Rosa Abendanon with her letter of 17 June 1908, *Realizing the Dream of R.A. Kartini*.

49 Letter to J.H. Abendanon, 18 February 1914, *Realizing the Dream.*

office of the typewriter, telephone and clock; in houses of the aristocrat-administrator class we see chandeliers, dining table sets, pianos, even bicycles brought before the camera. In tailoring shops open to the street we see the sewing machine and its indigenous tailors who launched men into jobs and new identities in new suits of clothes.

Many photographs in the KITLV and KIT archives show Indonesians stationed in their place of work as draftsmen, station masters, police, clerks, school teachers and politicians. Lamster's moving images give us the sense of a capable, self-regulating workforce. Close-ups of foremen in action organising, commanding and checking, with the white boss unseen, remind us who ran the colony at ground level. The absence of royals in the colony's commercial centres, factories and on plantations perhaps prepared the workforce of the colonised for a republican society. The endless photos of royals and aristocrats in the image archives, on the other hand, suggest to us, probably quite misleadingly, a society still in thrall to its hereditary chiefs. Lamster's films are a valuable corrective.

Conclusions

Brooshooft and Lamster seem alike in their attachment to an ethically guided colonial policy as rationale for and driver of reform. There is nothing sentimental in Brooshooft's pen or Lamster's camera. Businessmen and liberals had opposed government control of the colony's economy and found in *De Locomotief's* editor an energetic supporter of private enterprise and campaigner for legislative separation of the colony from the metropole. But Indies circumstances caused Brooshooft to change his mind. It was the law that drove him to put natives first in government thinking and an Indies-first commitment that made him propose practical measures for socio-economic development in infrastructure, health and education. Businessmen benefited from these staples of the ethical agenda that built more roads, expanded port facilities, and produced a healthier, better-educated native workforce. Back in the Netherlands, Brooshooft became disillusioned by the slow progress of the ethical agenda. Colonial government and the natives alike disappointed him. Locher-Scholten says he felt his had been a voice crying in the wilderness for twenty-five years.[50] He continued to believe in the necessity of paternalistic oversight by the Dutch, and that it would take centuries for Indonesians to emerge from

50 Locher-Scholten, *Mr. P. Brooshooft*, 342.

their "feudal" mentality. When he died in 1921, the significance of *Sarekat Islam* and *Muhammadiyah* as challengers to Dutch control and bearers of their own ethical agendas was not yet discernible.

Lamster came of age after the Netherlands had met a key demand of its critics by ending the transfer of profits from Indies agriculture to the Dutch treasury. He joined the army for personal, domestic reasons, to bring relief to his widowed mother and five younger siblings. When he requested assignment to the Indies, the colonial army had been trying for two decades to conquer Aceh. Lamster's military experience in Aceh gave him a lasting admiration and respect for Van Heutsz, the commanding officer who called on Snouck Hurgronje's knowledge of Indonesians and Islam to devise a strategy for ending years of warfare.[51] Van Heutsz reversed the military strategy that pinned down KNIL forces behind the "defensive line" in favour of guerrilla squads composed of Indonesian and Dutch soldiers who had intimate knowledge of the Acehnese landscape and its people. The journalist H.C. Zentgraaff based his detailed account of these squads on interviews with KNIL veterans and former Acehnese fighters.[52] Van Heutsz, the "pacifier" of Aceh and *ethicus* presided, as Governor-General, over implementation of key Ethical Policy goals, especially expansion of schools on Java.

Lamster's post-army career was precisely in those branches of government devoted to increasing knowledge of Indonesia's land and peoples. This was his assigned duty and also his personal passion. He was a self-taught anthropologist who later, after his Indies days were behind him, brought his knowledge to a wider readership through his publications in the 1920s and 1930s. This was the man selected to present a view of the Indies that would attract the "right" kind of people into colonial service, men who would work in the Indies for a number of years in a career that would begin and end in the Netherlands.

Lamster was commissioned to show the Indies in a "factual" light – not the facts he knew of in 1912 as a fifteen-year resident of the Indies, as soldier, civilian employee, husband and father, but the Indies of the ethical vision. He filmed the "old and new" Indies. Conclusions must be tentative, for the primary sources are fifteen documentaries, edited, produced and selected by others than himself. But from what we have got, perhaps it is

51 Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936) was a scholar of Malay, Arabic and Islam, professor and author of many studies of Islam, and influential adviser to the colonial government on strategies for accommodating and containing its Muslim subjects.

52 H.C. Zentgraaff, *Atjeh* (Batavia: Koninklijke Drukkerij "de Unie", 1938).

allowable to propose that these documentaries show Lamster's own vision. Here is an Indies without the "feudalism" of its sultans and regents. Here is an Indies of industrious native workers, not crazed by "fanatic" devotion to Islam and intent on killing, but natives hitching their fortunes to the Dutch, literally keeping the wheels of the colony oiled. In addition to the manual labourers are those climbing career ladders. We see the foremen and supervisors who have come out of the lower ranks. We see paramedics and veterinary students who have graduated from the high schools and vocational institutes the Dutch had established and who had enrolled in the new tertiary colleges in the colony. And there are the girls, studying domestic science so they can run hygienic homes and supervise servants in the right way to wash and iron. These girls, too, are participants in the ethical program.

Perhaps Indies candidates, viewing these documentaries in cinemas in the Netherlands, were surprised by the seeming absence of Dutchmen in the day-to-day management of the colony's enterprises and people. Where could they place themselves in this Indies when Lamster's films seemed to show they were unnecessary? Brooshooft had argued for a Java run by natives who would be products of Dutch training. Lamster recorded on film the early success of the Ethical Policy. In his documentaries on European lifestyle in the Indies he identified the function of Dutch people born and educated in the Netherlands. They are, inevitably, at the top, presented in distant, haughty demonstration of their status as possessors of science and modernity in the colony. They are its temporary residents. We do not follow them to the office, the business firm or on *tournée* (tour of inspection). We see them only as users of the amenities of the modern city.

The European family in the Lamster documentaries is a Dutch immigrant family, children stunningly blond. This is not the family of Lamster, husband to a Eurasian, and father to children who chose the land of their birth over the Netherlands. When Lamster lived in the Indies, 80 per cent of the European segment had been born there and were part Indonesian. But Eurasians were not the sponsors of ethical policies. Indeed, they were competitors with middle-class Indonesians for government jobs and for control of the colony's future. We see this Indies fact of life in the faces of the school children pouring out of high school in Lamster's film. They, like Lamster's children, were there to stay, at least as they anticipated the future in the second decade of the twentieth century.

Lamster left the colony in 1924. *Budi Utomo*[53] had formed four years before his filming. By the time he departed, *Sarekat Islam* had expanded to maybe a million members. We see their leaders at a 1921 conference in Central Java, dressed in Western jackets and sarongs beneath a banner proclaiming their conference in the Dutch language and Latin letters.[54] *Ethicus* Governor-General Idenburg had banished to the Netherlands the founding trio of the Indies Party, the Eurasian E.F.E. Douwes Dekker and the Javanese Soewardi Soeryaningrat and Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo. Their goal was an Indies led by "those who make their home here", that is, Eurasians and Indonesians, without the careful guidance of the *ethici*. From the last years of the 1920s, nationalist parties began campaigning for an Indonesian state in which there would be no place at all for the Dutch.

These changes did not alter Lamster's views. Back in the Netherlands he found his place working with Indies artifacts at the Colonial Museum in Amsterdam and writing what he knew of the colony and its diverse inhabitants. He was a tireless speaker on Indies topics during the 1920s and 30s, on the Indies captured in his vision of 1912. Lamster spent the grim years of the German occupation of the Netherlands writing a biography of Van Heutsz. He lived to see, but not welcome, the Republic of Indonesia.

Today, Indonesian and European alike can look at Lamster's film record and the hierarchical society it depicted and condemn the age of colonialism. But, looking back, we now know Lamster was right to train his camera on the "new" young men and women. His paramedic and veterinary students joined the nationalist parties and filled the leadership circles of the republican movement; the female high school graduates joined the ladies' branches. Their descendants today run Indonesia, not the Dutch and not the royals. Neither those representatives of the new indigenous middle class whom we see in Lamster's documentaries nor their heirs wanted to drive Indonesia into a pre-industrial past, as Pol Pot did in Cambodia. They committed to a message differently phrased, a "just and prosperous" society. Their policy embraced the modernity of the ethical era, but had no use for the relationship that Brooshooft had described as born of the strong conquering the weak and *consequently* owing them a duty. Drawing on inspiration from many sources – Western,

53 Translated as Glorious Endeavour or Lofty Intent, this was an organisation of Javanese intellectuals, influenced by the colonial discourse on Ethical Policy. They aimed to revive respect for Javanese cultural heritage and bring education and uplift to the masses.

54 See inv. nr. 60009089 in the Tropenmuseum online collection.

Asian and Islamic[55] – Indonesians brought an end to the relationship that had been imposed "against their will".

Pictures, as Burke tells us, demand the historian's thousand words to make historical evidence of them.[56] The photograph and moving picture recorded an ethical Indies and were inextricably part of it. Despite the artifice and conventions imposed by early camera technology, they are a record of everyday life in the Indies born of creative encounters between coloniser and colonised. What *camera ethica* captured in stills and flickering movement is a legacy for Indonesia and Indonesians.

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55 The Indonesian formula for the good society, *adil dan makmur* (just and prosperous), draws on vocabulary derived from Arabic.

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3 Ethical projects, ethnographic orders and colonial notions of modernity in Dutch Borneo

G.L. Tichelman's Queen's Birthday photographs from the late 1920s

Susie Protschky

In the closing years of the 1920s, Gerard Louwrens Tichelman (1893-1962), a colonial official stationed in the southeast of Dutch Borneo (present-day Kalimantan), assembled three family photograph albums filled with diverse scenes from his daily personal and working life.[1] Recurring throughout these albums were images of celebrations for *Koninginnedag*, or Queen's (Birth) Day, an event that many other Europeans in the Netherlands Indies also commemorated in family photographs during the early twentieth century. Despite the frequency of such images, and the acknowledged political and cultural significance of Queen's Day festivals in late-colonial Indonesia, this genre of family photographs has largely escaped historical analysis.[2] Unusually, Tichelman also pasted photographs of the festival into his official logbook (*dagboek*) containing monthly reports to the Resident, the Dutch governor of the district.[3] Such a use of photographs was rare in the reports of lower administrators from the Outer Provinces (*Buitengewesten*) in the 1920s.

What was it about *Koninginnedag* that inspired G.L. Tichelman to photographically document the occasion, not just for his own private purposes but also for his government colleagues? And what modes of looking permeate the photographs in the two venues that Tichelman chose to commemorate

1 The three albums – 187 (1927), 188 (1928) and 189 (1923-27) – belong to the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (KITLV), Leiden, Special Collections. Special thanks to Liesbeth Ouwehand for her assistance.

2 I have begun to examine Indies family photographs of Queen's Day celebrations elsewhere: see Susie Protschky, "The empire illuminated: Electricity, 'ethical' colonialism and enlightened monarchy in photographs of Dutch royal celebrations, 1898-1948," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 13:3 (2012): http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_colonialism_and_colonial_history/v013/13.3.protschky.html.

3 Nationaal Archief (Dutch National Archives), The Hague, Collectie 133 G.L. Tichelman, 1907-1940 [Hereafter, NL-HaNA, Tichelman] 2.21.097.01, inv. nr. 19: *Dagboek*, Barabai (1928).

the festival? How does Tichelman's gaze enframe and constitute the occasion, and to what ends?

The key to addressing these questions in Tichelman's photography lies in examining the broader connections between the Ethical Policy, Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands and governing practices in the Outer Provinces in the early twentieth century. It was during the reign of Wilhelmina (1898-1948) that the House of Orange, which had been involved in Dutch colonial expansion since the seventeenth century, emerged as the key symbolic figurehead of the Dutch imperium, particularly in the Netherlands Indies.[4] Here, Wilhelmina's name also became synonymous with the Ethical Policy after she outlined new terms of reference for Dutch rule of the Indies in her annual address to parliament (the *troonrede*, or "speech from the throne") in 1901. Only a few sentences of the oration referred to the Indies, but they included the pillars of what would define the policy: an inquiry into the "diminished welfare" (*mindere welvaart*) of the Javanese, decentralisation of the colonial administration, and further "pacification" of north Sumatra.[5] Wilhelmina's speech gave the royal stamp of approval to a reform movement that had been gathering strength among liberal (and, to a lesser extent, Christian) politicians and journalists in the Indies and the Netherlands for decades.[6]

Soon after Wilhelmina was inaugurated as queen in 1898, *Koninginnedag* emerged in the Indies as an important annual event for celebrating the colony as a Dutch possession and uniting it with other parts of the Dutch colonial world.[7] Historically, this was a novel development on a number of levels. The rites of passage of leading members of the House of Orange had been celebrated sporadically in the Indies since the VOC period.[8] However,

4 Pieter Eckhardt, "'Wij zullen handhaven!' De symbolische betekenis van de Nederlandse monarchie in Nederlands-Indië, 1918-1940" (Masters diss., University of Amsterdam, 2002).

5 Queen Wilhelmina, "Troonrede van 17 September 1901," in *Troonredes, Openingsredes, Inhuldigingsredes 1814-1963*, introduced and annotated by E. van Raalte (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1964), 193-194 at 194.

6 Importantly, the Christian responsibilities toward the "natives" of the Indies that the devoutly Calvinist Wilhelmina cited as the basis for her recommendations in her speech serves as a reminder that it was not just liberals who formulated the Ethical Policy: Queen Wilhelmina, "Troonrede van 17 September 1901," 194. Indeed, in 1901 a coalition of Christian parties formed the Cabinet of the Dutch Parliament.

7 Jaap van Osta, *Het theater van de staat; Oranje, Windsor en de moderne monarchie* (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 1998), 105, 137, 233, 235; Pieter Eckhardt, "'Wij zullen handhaven!' Oranje feesten in Indië (1918-1940)," *Indische Letteren: Feesten in Indië* 21:1 (2006): 31-44.

8 VOC = *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (United East India Company). Adrienne Zuiderweg, "Vuurwerk, illuminaties en wijnspuitende fonteinen; VOC-feestvreugde in Batavia," *Indische Letteren; Feesten in Indië* 21:1 (2006): 81-94. In the VOC period, celebrations were for the Princes of Orange. The House of Oranje-Nassau became a monarchy in 1813.

Wilhelmina was the first monarch for whom public birthday celebrations became a regular fixture with the specific aim of unifying Dutch subjects under a common figurehead.[9] The trigger for this development occurred in Wilhelmina's youth, a period of widening political and religious rifts in Dutch society. In the 1880s Dutch political elites, particularly liberal nationalists, were keen to support an anniversary that would forge unity in the Netherlands, at least for one day a year. *Prinsessedag* (Wilhelmina's birthday, on 31 August) emerged as the most neutral, inclusive and popular option for celebrating national history through rituals that included ordinary people as participants as well as spectators. Ironically (given that monarchy is an inherently elitist – and, for the Netherlands, historically recent – institution), the festival presented a crucial opportunity for liberals to respond to the emerging challenge of mass politics. Incidentally, *Koninginnedag* also revived public support for the monarchy. (Wilhelmina's father, Willem III – or "King Gorilla", as he was rather woundingly termed by his detractors – had been an unpopular monarch.)[10]

Importantly, then, from its very inception during the 1880s, the week-long festival that came to mark Wilhelmina's birthday emerged as an occasion for the orchestration of unity in diversity among the queen's subjects.[11] In Dutch colonies – the West Indies, East Indies and Suriname – the potential for displaying the unifying power of the monarchy was all the greater for the diversity of subjects that could be convened, although nowhere more so perhaps than in the East Indies, with its thousands of islands and numerous ethnic and language groups.

9 Henk te Velde, *Gemeenschapszin en plichtsbesef: Liberalisme en nationalisme in Nederland, 1870-1918* (The Hague: SDU, 1992), 123, 132; Gertjan van Schoonhoven, "'Houd Oranje boven in de troep eronder'; De geschiedenis van de nationale feestdag Koninginnedag," in *De monarchie; Staatsrecht, volksgunst en het huis van Oranje*, ed. Remco Meijer and H.J. Schoo (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2002), 137-168 at 139-147; Gert Oostindie, *De parels en de kroon: Het koningshuis en de koloniën* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 2006), 75, 78; Jaap van Osta, "The emperor's new clothes: The reappearance of the performing monarchy in Europe, c. 1870-1914," in *Mystifying the Monarch: Studies on Discourse, Power, and History*, ed. Henk te Velde (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 181-192 at 187.

10 Te Velde, *Gemeenschapszin en plichtsbesef*, 16, 121-122, 130-134, 140-141, 268-270; Pieter Drooglever, "De monarchie in Indië," *Ex Tempore* 17 (1998), 221-236 at 123.

11 The same idea was promoted by the British monarchy in its imperial heyday, as David Cannadine has persuasively shown, although Cannadine focused particularly on the solidarity between *elites* rather than unity among the masses: David Cannadine, "The context, performance and meaning of ritual: The British monarchy and the "invention of tradition", ca. 1820-1977," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Rangers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 101-164; David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin, 2001).

Wilhelmina's reign coincided with a distinctive period in which the symbolic power of monarchy to order and unify became more urgent. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries encompassed an era of "high imperialism" for the Dutch in the East Indies, one that included the greatest concentration of military subjugation campaigns and most significant territorial gains of the modern colonial period.[12] The rhetoric of benevolent rule that characterised the Ethical Policy was thus underpinned by violent conquest. The political dramas of the era tended to originate in Java and Sumatra, where resistance to Dutch colonialism became more organised during the 1920s under nationalist and communist parties. Indeed, as Pieter Eckhardt has persuasively argued in his study of the interwar era, the rise of Orangism among Dutch authorities in Java in this period coincided with mounting challenges from anti-colonial organisations.[13] The fact that Wilhelmina entered the maturity of her reign in these decades – commencing with her silver jubilee (25 years on the throne) in 1923 – was a coincidence that gave new meaning to the royal motto, *Je maintiendrai* ("I will maintain").

Java may have been the centre of political discord, but the Outer Provinces were the most significant theatre of Dutch expansion in the late-colonial period. G.L. Tichelman served out his career here in this era of conflict, ethicism and Orangism, first in Maluku (1916-22), then Dutch Borneo (1923-29), and finally in Sumatra (1931-37). The propaganda value of *Koninginnedag* was significant in these islands not just because the high ideals of the Ethical Policy met their greatest contradictions here. During the period that Tichelman served as *Gezaghebber* (Administrator) of Tanah Boemboe (1923-25) and Acting *Controleur* of Barabai (1926-29),[14] southeast

12 Henk Schulte Nordholt, "A genealogy of violence," in *Roots of Violence in Indonesia: Contemporary Violence in Historical Perspective*, ed. Freek Colombijn and J. Thomas Lindblad (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), 33-61 at 36.

13 Eckhardt, "'Wij zullen handhaven!'" (2002) (2006); see also Oostindie, *De parels en de kroon*, 66, 72-74, 78-79, 81-83.

14 *Gezaghebber* means, literally, "holder of authority", and was a post that ranked below *controleur*. The position was invented for the Outer Provinces, where rapid Dutch expansion in the early twentieth century led to increased pressure on the civil service. To meet demand at the lowest possible cost, the Indies administration inflated the lower ranks of the civil service; indeed, in Borneo Tichelman reported directly to the Resident (rather than an Assistant Resident). Levels of responsibility in lower Outer Provinces positions were often greater but less well remunerated than the same ranks in Java and Madura. Waiting periods for promotion were also longer in the Outer Provinces: H.W. van den Doel, "Military rule in the Netherlands Indies," in *The Late Colonial State in Indonesia: Political and Economic Foundations of the Netherlands Indies 1880-1942*, ed. Robert Cribb (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1994), 57-78 at 69-70. Tichelman's particular frustrations – he complained often about his low salary to superiors, and did not attain the rank of (Aspirant)

Borneo had not long been integrated into the Dutch colonial state, and its population, society and economy were undergoing rapid transformation as a consequence. The region had been part of the Banjarmasin Sultanate before its subjugation by Dutch military forces in 1860. (Tichelman preferred the ethical euphemism "the bringing of peace and order" for the Banjarmasin War in his short overview of the region's history.)[15] It was not until the early twentieth century, however, that Borneo attracted more sustained scientific and administrative attention from the Dutch.[16] By the time Tichelman left Barabai in 1929, it was the most densely populated district in the Residency of South and East Borneo, with just under a hundred thousand people.[17] The ethnic diversity of the region presented particular challenges to Dutch authorities. The category of *Inlander* (Native), used in Tichelman's reports to describe the vast majority of the population, in fact masked a variety of ethnic groups including Dayak, Buginese, Malays, Javanese, Madurese and Bajau. The district of Barabai additionally hosted a growing number of "Foreign Orientals" – consisting of several hundred Chinese, as well as Hadrami Arabs and "Hindus" from British India – who formed important trade and business enclaves.[18] Europeans like Tichelman and those with "equivalent" status – including a small community of Japanese entrepreneurs (among them studio photographers) – made up a tiny proportion of the population, some 30 people in 1928.[19]

Assistant Resident until 1937, while posted in Sumatra – were thus typical of his cohort: KITLV Special Collections, Collectie Tichelman, H814(5), (10), (11).

15 NL-HaNA, Tichelman 2.21.097.01, inv. nr. 21: *Memorie van Overgave*, Barabai (1926-29), 234.

16 In the early 1890s a scientific expedition to central Borneo was conducted to collect zoological, botanical, geological, cartographic and ethnographic data. The key publications to result from this expedition were: G.A.F. Molengraaff, *Borneo-expeditie: Geologische verkennings-tochten in centraal-Borneo* (Leiden and Amsterdam: E.J. Brill/ H. Gerlings, 1900); A.W. Nieuwenhuis, *In Centraal Borneo: Reis van Pontianak naar Samarinda* (Leiden: Brill, 1900); J. Büttikofer and F.A. Jentink, *Zoological Results of the Dutch Scientific Expedition to Central Borneo* (1897). The key nineteenth-century study of Borneo was P.J. Veth, *Borneo's wester-afdeeling: Geographisch, statistisch, historisch voorafgegaan door eene algemeene schets des ganschen eilands* (Zaltbommel: Joh. Noman en Zoon, 1854-56).

17 NL-HaNA, Tichelman 2.21.097.01, inv. nr. 21: *Memorie van Overgave*, Barabai (1926-9), 57.

18 On the category of 'Foreign Oriental' in the Indies, see Charles A. Coppel, "The Indonesian Chinese as 'Foreign Orientals' in the Netherlands Indies," in *Indonesian Law and Society*, ed. Timothy Lindsey (Sydney: The Federation Press, 1999), 33-41.

19 NL-HaNA, Tichelman 2.21.097.01, inv. nr. 21: *Memorie van Overgave*, Barabai (1926-29), 57. Tichelman's 1927 family album included photographs of stalls run by Japanese studio photographers at the annual fair that was introduced to coincide with Queen's Birthday in Barabai during his tenure: KITLV Special Collections, Album 187, inv. nrs. 83597, 83600. Tichelman was in fact creole, born to European parents in Palembang, Sumatra. His wife, Sjoukjen, appears to have been Indo-European (Eurasian). The two were thus a typical "European" couple in the

Tichelman was thus living and working at the frontier of Dutch expansion and at the vanguard of the ethical experiment with colonial rule in the Indies. In Outer Province postings the ability of European officials to, firstly, distinguish between diverse ethnic communities and, secondly, sort the friends of the colonial administration from its potential foes were key governing tasks. Deliberations over matters of order and loyalty took up many pages in Tichelman's reports. His logbooks and handover memoranda to successors distribute the various ethnic groups of Barabai between categories that denote, among other qualities, receptivity to what he conceives to be modern, European forms of governance. In this regard, Tichelman shared much in common with British counterparts in India where, as Christopher Pinney has noted, colonial authorities produced countless photographs as well as written reports to sort local populations into three main categories: those who were likely to comply with the colonial government; those who were considered dangerously rebellious; and those who were irrelevant by virtue of being deemed on the point of extinction. The latter were candidates for the thriving academic field of salvage ethnography, but practically inconsequential for colonial administrators.[20]

Tichelman's *Koninginnedag* photographs from Barabai disclose this fundamental activity of colonial scholar-officials in unique ways. In images where the emphasis was on local participation in the celebrations, Queen's Birthday functions as a contextual framework through which Tichelman approached the related problems of ethnography and governance. The next section of this chapter examines how Tichelman's photographs registered ethnographic categories according to what kind of challenge they presented to ethical rule in modes that were complementary to but distinct from his textual reports. While his logs and memoranda were deeply concerned with the physical and cultural traits of natives such as Malays, Buginese and Dayak, and passed only briefly over Foreign Orientals, his photographs revealed different interests. They pictured only those communities that posed a potential challenge to the colonial government (Javanese, Malays,

context of the late-colonial Indies, where most of the European population was either born locally, or part Asian, or both. This was particularly the case for members of the BB: Ulbe Bosma and Remco Raben, *Being "Dutch" in the Indies: A History of Creolisation and Empire, 1500-1920*, transl. Wendie Shaffer (Athens, Oh.: Research in International Studies Southeast Asia Series no. 116, Ohio University Press, 2008), 184, 187, 213.

20 Christopher Pinney, *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs* (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 34, 35, 44-46; see also Linda Roodenburg, *Anceaux's Glasses: Anthropological Photography Since 1860* (Leiden: Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, 2002), 3, 28.

Foreign Orientals) and elided the group deemed on the verge of extinction by virtue of its "primitive" character (the Dayak). While his reports are comprehensive, then, his photographs create orders of exclusion and utilise categories of (in)visibility.

Tichelman's *Koninginnedag* photographs not only reveal the framework and orders of official thought that linked the queen with ethical rule and ethnographic governance. They also provide unique insights into how colonial photography functioned as an intellectual aid, a technology for thinking with that flexibly served different genres of colonial work. In the final section of this chapter, by restoring what Elizabeth Edwards has termed the "human centre" to colonial photography,[21] I interrogate how one of its practitioners used the camera to creatively construct disciplines of vision. While Tichelman's photographs of local participation in Queen's Birthday celebrations were often made with an ethnographer's eye, they were not explicitly taken with an anthropological audience in mind. The pictures in his family albums, for instance, were placed there for his own viewing and that of his intimates, while the images in his official reports were intended for his colleagues in the BB (*Binnenlands Bestuur*, or "Interior Administration").

Far from simply constructing ethnographic typologies of subject "Others", then, as some scholars of colonial photography have persisted in arguing,[22] Tichelman's adaptable use of photographs – in official reportage *and* in autobiographical albums – collapses and condenses distinct fields of colonial inquiry into a single frame which is only later disaggregated into genres through the act of selecting the *contexts* of the photographs' visual display. The replicability of photographs as images, and their ability to be re-moved and re-ordered as objects, allowed them to be deployed in various venues to articulate targeted aspects of a larger politico-ethnographic narrative. Tichelman's photographs thus reveal the complex entanglement of ethicism as a governing philosophy with ethnography as a disciplined way of seeing at *Koninginnedag* celebrations in the 1920s.

21 Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), 29.

22 See, for example, Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson, "Introduction: Photography, 'race', and post-colonial theory," in *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place*, ed. Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 1-19 at 4; Rosalind C. Morris, "Introduction. Photographies east: The camera and its histories in East and Southeast Asia," in *Photographies East: The Camera and its Histories in East and Southeast Asia*, ed. Rosalind C. Morris (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009), 1-28 at 8.

Ethical framing, ethnographic orders and colonial notions of modernity in G.L. Tichelman's Queen's Birthday photographs

Early on in his administrative career, in south Ceram, G.L. Tichelman had diligently begun to note the annual occurrence of *Koninginnedag* in his reports to superiors.[23] It was not until the mid-1920s, however, while stationed in Borneo, that he began to collect festival memorabilia, such as programs of events, and to take numerous photographs to commemorate the occasion.[24] One reason for this change was the new importance attached to Queen's Birthday by Dutch authorities after 1923, the year of Wilhelmina's silver jubilee. The strength and success of the Dutch monarchy provided a triumphalist public discourse for Indies authorities to combat rising challenges to colonial rule in this period. Wilhelmina's longevity and anti-colonial resistance were bound together in Indies politics and news media throughout the 1920s and 30s.[25] Tichelman's attention to *Koninginnedag* thus became more acute in tandem with a widespread institutionalisation of the festival at the hands of colonial officials throughout the Indies.

On a more individual level, Tichelman's professional stake in the festival also increased as he advanced in his career. By the mid-1920s he had been promoted in the BB and was also President of the Barabai Festival Committee. He was thus directly responsible for ensuring that *Koninginnedag* was a success in his district. According to his own records, triumph meant guaranteeing *rust en orde* (peace and order) among local participants. In 1929 he estimated that twenty to thirty thousand people turned out for the market fair that coincided with Queen's Birthday week. Despite the ample crowds his reports state with evident satisfaction that the festivities proceeded "without incident".[26]

The gaze of a colonial administrator on the rise thus permeates Tichelman's images of *Koninginnedag* on a general level. More specific

23 NL-HaNA, Tichelman 2.21.097.01, inv. nr. 3: *Dagboek*, Amahei (1920); and inv. nr. 9: *Dagboek*, Tanah Boemboe (1924).

24 In 1926 and 1927 Tichelman kept copies of *Koninginnedag* programs for the first time. They were printed in Malay and were clearly intended to be distributed to the public: KITLV Special Collections, Collectie Tichelman, H814(35).

25 Eckhardt, "'Wij zullen handhaven!'" (2002).

26 NL-HaNA, Tichelman 2.21.097.01, inv. nr. 18: *Dagboek*, Barabai (1927); and inv. nr. 20: *Dagboek*, Barabai (1929). The practice of holding a public fair at *Koninginnedag* was imported from the Netherlands, where the events were successful because Wilhelmina's birthday was in summer – a far more salubrious time for a national celebration than her father's birthday (19 February) had been, in the dead of winter: Van Schoonhoven, "'Houd Oranje boven in de troep eronder,'" 142.

governing interests, however, inform his focus on particular groups in his photographs and reports. These concerns frame an ethnographic way of seeing – constructing differentiated groups with shared cultural traits – that was influenced by Tichelman's personal involvement in the disciplines of anthropology and ethnography. Indeed, Tichelman belonged to the last generation of amateur ethnographers before the practice became the domain of university academics. This transformation was already well under way in other parts of the colonial world, particularly in Britain and its empire;[27] but in the Netherlands Indies, colonial civil servants still provided a significant amount of ethnographic scholarship through opportunities afforded them in the course of their work, at "frontier" postings and on tour. This was certainly true for Tichelman, whose encounters with the Alfuru of Ceram, Batak tribes of Sumatra and locals in Aceh yielded material for numerous publications that appeared in a wide range of venues in the Indies and the Netherlands, including newspapers, specialist periodicals and educational materials for children and young adults.[28] In fact, Tichelman's ethnographic experience gained while on the job as a civil servant furnished him with a second career when he retired from the BB and returned to the Netherlands in 1937. Thereafter he worked as a conservator in the Ethnographic Department, among other postings, at the Colonial Institute (later the Royal Tropical Institute) in Amsterdam.[29]

Tichelman's intellectual interest in ethnography was also reinforced by an "ethical" administrative corps committed to an historicist vision of human civilisations, where an ideal, stagist model of European development formed the basis for describing differences between societies in "historical" terms.[30] Such assumptions demanded supple governance of European officials dealing with indigenous populations. Adherents to ethical colonialism were committed to adapting their ruling style to the different needs of a

27 Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 37, 46-47.

28 For a comprehensive list of Tichelman's published and unpublished works, see the meticulous inventory compiled by G.J. Knaap, *Inventaris Collectie G.L. Tichelman H814* (Leiden: KITLV, 1995). Tichelman also published on people and places in the Indies where he had not served as an official, especially New Guinea, which he wrote about with growing frequency from the late 1940s onward to promote it as a Dutch colony rather than a province of the Republic of Indonesia.

29 In 1945 Tichelman was transferred to Central Information at what was renamed the Indies Institute in the same year. In 1951, when the institute acquired its current name (Royal Tropical Institute: *Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen*, or KIT), Tichelman was moved to Tropical Products, where he remained until his retirement in 1958: Knaap, *Inventaris Collectie G.L. Tichelman*, 11-13.

30 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), xiv, xv, 7, 8.

Figure 1 Photograph from the family album of G.L. Tichelman showing a *kuda képang* performance, Barabai (Dutch Borneo), 31 August 1926

Source: KITLV Image Collection, Leiden, Album 189, Image 83750

diverse population; there was only one colonial future into which these groups were to be ushered in this philosophy, but the paths to modernity were various, and best determined by skilled European officials.

Kuda képang: New (colonial) meanings for an old (Javanese) dance

Tichelman's photographs of Javanese participation in *Koninginnedag* celebrations reveal an ethical governing philosophy closely bound with ethnographic ways of seeing. Tichelman chose to focus on the performance of a *kuda képang* (hobby-horse) dance,[31] which he photographed at Tanah Boemboe in 1926 and again at Barabai in 1927 (figures 1 and 2). The images were later pasted into two of his family albums, in sections that commemorated other aspects of the celebrations.[32] Tichelman was by no means the first European to take an interest in *kuda képang*. The dance intrigued various Dutch observers throughout the 1920s and 30s, many of whom

31 The dance is also known as *jaran képang*.

32 See KITLV Special Collections, Albums 187 and 189.

Figure 2 Page from the family album of G.L. Tichelman, showing photographs of *kuda képang* performances together with parading school children, Barabai, 31 August 1927

Source: KITLV Image Collection, Leiden, Album 187

speculated that it derived from an ancient combat ritual.[33] Its origins have been traced at least as far back as the eighteenth century, and the dance is still performed in parts of central Java today, usually by boys as part of a larger recital.[34] The *kuda képang* photographs were among the few that Tichelman provided captions for, to identify the performance by name. In doing so, Tichelman was signalling to the circle of intimates who viewed his family albums his skills of ethnographic discernment and, by extension, his membership of an elite, learned community of Europeans who took an interest in such matters.

An ethnographic eye is also evident in how Tichelman composed the *kuda képang* photographs. The perspectives he adopted, consciously or otherwise, reflect a discipline in a state of flux. In the first example (figure

33 See W. Staugaard, "Koeda-K'pang," *Handelingen van het eerste congres voor de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Java* (Weltevreden: Albrecht, 1921); A.J. Resink-Wilkens, "The Yogya festival calendar," in *The Kraton: Selected Essays on Javanese Courts*, transl. Rosemary Robson-McKillop, ed. Stuart Robson, originally published 1932 (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2003), 83-90 at 87.

34 Margaret J. Kartomi, "Music and meaning of réyog ponorogo," *Indonesia* 22 (October 1976): 84-130 at 88, 105, 114. The origins of the dance most likely predate the eighteenth century, when it was first documented as undergoing refinement at the royal courts.

1) Tichelman has separated from the crowd of spectators and moved into the middle of the road to gain a full view of the performance. The focal distance in this image is greater than for the other photographs of local participation in *Koninginnedag* events in the album – an index, as some scholars have argued, of techniques that were commonly used by anthropologists to impose an objective remoteness between themselves and the subject of their study.[35] In the later examples (figure 2) Tichelman rejoins the crowd to take a closer view of the dance. He thereby seems to experiment with the participant-observer method that was in ascendency among anthropological fieldworkers in the early twentieth century.

In Javanese culture, *kuda képang* has been associated with eroticism, fertility rites, trance and animism.[36] Tichelman's photographs, however, give little indication of the dance's significance to the Javanese who performed and observed it. Instead, his images commemorate a new public use for the dance. The Dutch flags festooning the hobby-horses and the location of the performance under the watchful eyes of white-clad officials – indeed, under the very eaves of the Assistant Residency, which Tichelman occupied for much of his tenure in Barabai[37] – lend a peculiarly colonial inflection to the display. The photograph represents the orchestrated participation of Javanese emigrants to Borneo in a festival intended to celebrate the longevity of a Dutch queen and her authority over a diverse but well-managed population of colonial subjects.

The ethical framework in which Queen's Birthday celebrations were staged is also evident in how Tichelman placed the *kuda képang* photographs in his family album. In 1927 they share the page with a parade of school children (figure 2). Two kinds of education are thereby celebrated together, the one comprehensive, to be bestowed on locals, and the other rather more specialised, the province of governing Europeans. Both represent the BB's commitment to ensuring progress for indigenous people (of a paternalistic kind, as will be demonstrated shortly) through knowledge.

35 Martha MacIntyre and Maureen Mackenzie, "Focal length as an analogue of cultural distance," in *Anthropology and Photography 1860-1920*, ed. Elizabeth Edwards (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 158-164.

36 Kartomi, "Music and meaning of réyog ponorogo," 88, 105; Resink-Wilkens, "The Yogya festival calendar," 87.

37 It's not clear why Tichelman lived in the Assistant Residency in Barabai, as it wasn't until 1937, while posted in Sumatra, that he reached the rank of (Aspirant) Assistant Resident. The increased responsibilities of lower officials in Outer Province postings may provide an explanation: see note 14.

If we examine the *kuda képang* photographs from a local perspective, they further illustrate the rapid, recent changes to the social fabric of southeast Borneo that followed Dutch intervention in the region. The fact that Javanese were present to perform "typical" dances at *Koninginnedag* in the first instance reflects a program of government-assisted migration intended to alleviate over-population in Java by relocating whole communities to promising but labour-poor sites of economic activity in the Outer Islands. The Javanese in Tichelman's district emigrated on the promise of becoming agricultural colonists on lands set aside in 1923. However, the settlers' aspirations exceeded those that the colonial government harboured for them. As Tichelman recorded with some dismay, many Javanese sold their allotments and rapidly emerged as a landholding class, causing tensions within the local community and a subsequent headache for officials on the ground.[38]

Triumphal arches: Foreign Orientals signified

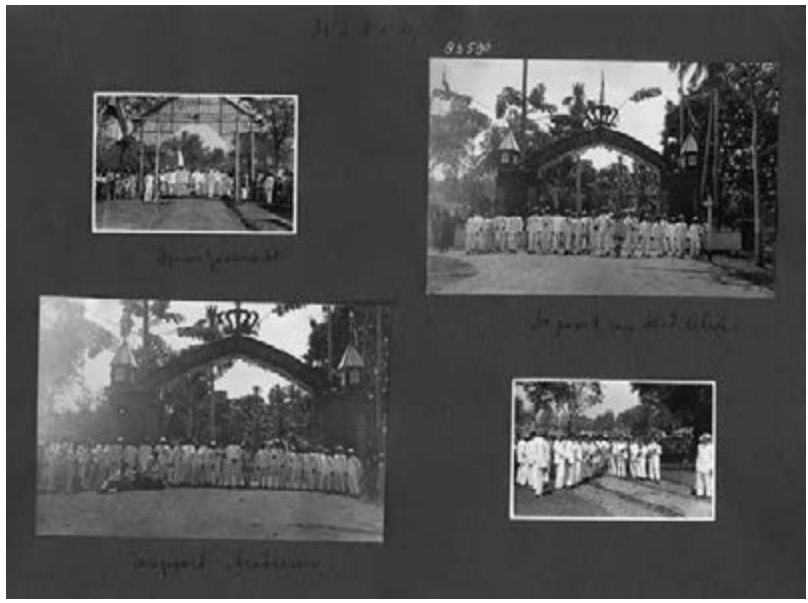
Other unplanned social changes accompanied Dutch intervention in southeast Borneo. Tichelman and his predecessors kept meticulous notes on the growing number of "Foreign Orientals" who were attracted by the economic opportunities in the district of Barabai. The Chinese population increased especially quickly – from 47 in 1920 to 230 in 1928 – so much so that a District Warden (*wijkmeester*) was appointed in 1928 to "represent" the community to the Dutch Resident, following conventions established throughout the Indies and colonial Southeast Asia.[39]

Tichelman's *Koninginnedag* photographs record these burgeoning migrant communities of Barabai from a distinctly colonial perspective, one concerned with the ethnographic tools that could be applied to the political problems posed by rapid demographic change. His family albums contain numerous photographs of *erepoorten* (gates of honour) that were erected across the major roads and entrances to *wijken* (suburbs, or quarters) in the township of Barabai to celebrate Wilhelmina's birthday. The practice was adapted from festivals in the Netherlands, where *erepoorten* were always among the decorations that Dutch towns displayed to celebrate the princes

38 NL-HaNA, Tichelman 2.21.097.01, inv. nr. 21: *Memorie van Overgave*, Barabai (1926-29), 96-97.

39 Ibid., 57, 181. On Chinese quarters in Indies towns and cities, see Freek Colombijn (with the assistance of Martine Barwegen), *Under Construction: The Politics of Urban Space and Housing during the Decolonization of Indonesia, 1930-1960* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2010).

Figure 3 Page from the family photograph album of G.L. Tichelman showing photographs of "The gate of Said Alisi/Triumphal arch of the Arabs" and the "Open air market", Barabai, 31 August 1927



Source: KITLV Image Collection, Leiden, Album 187

and monarchs of Orange.[40] One page from Tichelman's 1927 album shows two photographs of the arch at the entrance to the Arab quarter of Barabai. The caption indicates that it was erected at the expense of an inhabitant named Said Alisi (figure 3).

Further examples appear in Tichelman's official logbook of 1928, this time for the benefit of his superior, the Resident, rather than for his family and friends. They fill a special supplement to the logbook, a comprehensive photographic list of sixteen gates of honour, each image pasted onto the page, numbered and given typewritten captions. The arches had been raised to celebrate the visit of Governor-General Andries Cornelis Dirk de Graeff (r. 1926-31), the Queen's representative in the Indies, to Barabai on 11 September, less than two weeks after *Koninginnedag*.[41] The *erepoorten* pictured served both celebrations that year.

40 Protschky, "The empire illuminated".

41 NL-HaNA, Tichelman 2.21.097.01, inv. nr. 19: *Dagboek*, Barabai (1928).

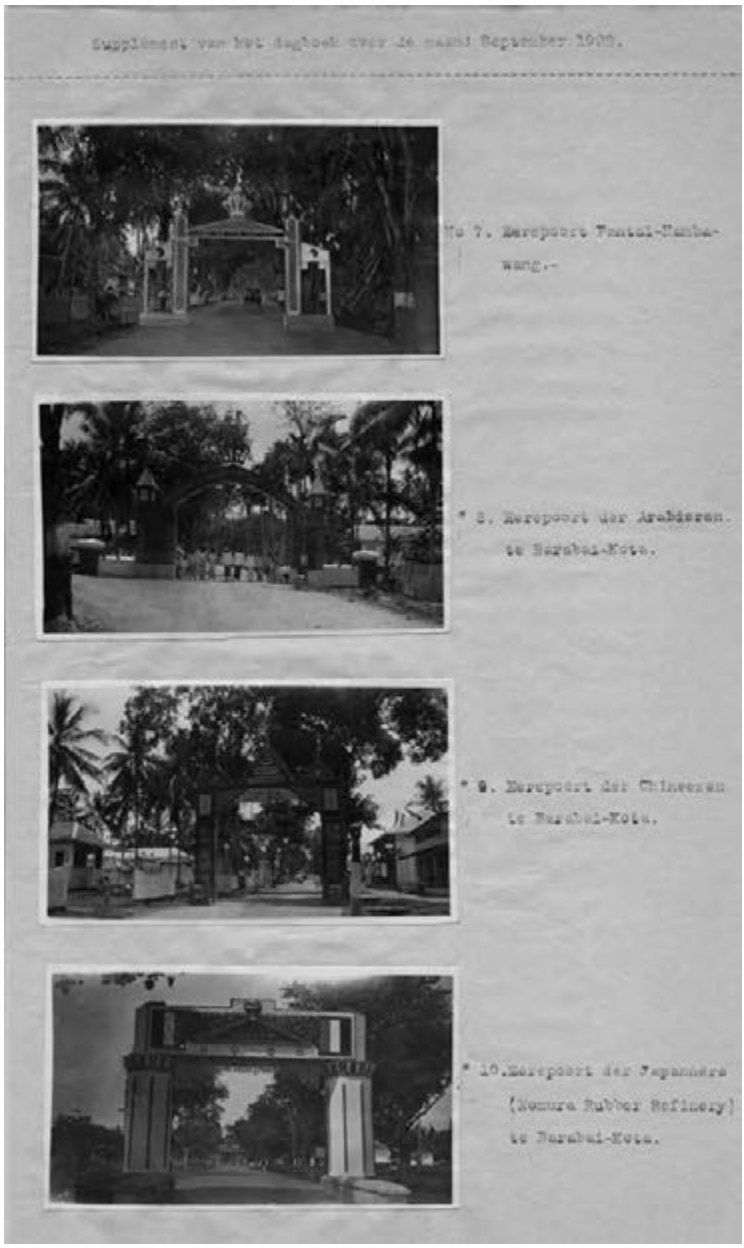
Tichelman's family album and logbook photographs of gates of honour reveal how colonial authorities in the Indies, just as in other parts of colonial Asia, conceived of the various ethnic groups residing in major towns in spatially segregated terms, ostensibly to rationalise governance of communities with different customs and modes of social organisation.[42] The photographs also disclose a kind of visual shorthand for designating ethnicity in ways that differed markedly from how colonial photographers represented groups deemed indigenous to the Indonesian archipelago. Ethno-photographers closely scrutinised the physiognomies, ornaments, apparel and accoutrements of indigenous people, to the extent that their individual identities were often effaced at the expense of the ethnic "type" they were literally meant to embody.[43] Tichelman's photographs of the Foreign Orientals of Barabai, by contrast, showed no regard for such detail. With the exception of the Arab-quarter photographs, which feature a line-up of local men and boys, all the other *erepoort* images in Tichelman's family albums and logbook are either entirely unpopulated or else human figures are only distantly present, as in the photograph of the Chinese quarter (figure 4). The emphasis in these images was thus on the *representativeness* of the ethnic communities evoked by the gates – Malays, Chinese, Japanese and Arabs – rather than on the individuals or even the "types" whom the arches might signify.[44] The gates of honour stand for the communities and frame Tichelman's mode of seeing them. The camera's lens imposes an additional frame – one for posterity, and for perusing by executive officials – around the signified community. The specificities and varieties behind the gate thus become more contained, abbreviated and opaque with each representation.

42 For Foreign Orientals, an Ordinance on Restrictive Choice of Residence was in place in the Outer Islands until 1926 (and on Java, until 1919). Even after its repeal, however, Chinese in particular often continued to cluster in residential quarters. In other instances, Indies neighbourhoods were never entirely ethnically homogeneous, for income was also important for determining place of residence: Colombijn, *Under Construction*, 83-85, 96-97.

43 Colonial ethnographers were often oblivious to what the appearance of their subjects signalled within their own community about an individual such as their age or marital status: Christopher Wright, "Supple bodies: The Papua New Guinea photographs of Captain Francis R. Barton, 1899-1907," in *Photography's Other Histories*, ed. Christopher Pinney and Nicolas Peterson (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 146-169.

44 Corporate pillars of the community – businesses and governing groups, such as the Ice and Rice Processing Factory and the Local Council (*Plaatselijke Raad*) – also sponsored some of the triumphal arches in Tichelman's photographs: NL-HaNA, Tichelman 2.21.097.01, inv. nr. 19: *Dagboek*, Barabai (1928).

Figure 4 Page from G.L. Tichelman, "Supplement to the logbook about the month of September 1928"


Supplement van het dagboek over de maand September 1928.
No 7. Marapoort Fontein-Tambawang.-
* 8. Marapoort der Arabieren te Narabai-Kota.
* 9. Marapoort der Chineezen te Narabai-Kota.
* 10. Marapoort der Japanners (Nomura Rubber Refinery) te Narabai-Kota.

Source: National Archives, The Hague, ARA.2.21.097.01(19)

Vision and modernity: Dayak and orders of (in)visibility in Tichelman's reports

Tichelman's logbooks and handover memoranda do not work as simple annotations to the events that he photographed. In his notes, Tichelman paid little heed to groups the administration considered to be foreign to Borneo – Chinese, Arabs, Javanese and Madurese, some of the very peoples he favoured in his photographs.[45] Instead, Tichelman's logbooks were overwhelmingly devoted to groups that he either did not single out for special attention or picture at all in his *Koninginnedag* photographs: Malays and Dayak.

In his handover memorandum to his successor, written in 1926 upon his exit from Tanah Boemboe, Tichelman provided a chapter on the "inhabitants" (*bevolking*) of the district, as was the norm for such files. It combined anthropological descriptions of somatic "types" with ethnographic notes on cultural practices such as religiosity, economic organisation and customs of local communities.[46] The two groups that featured most prominently in Tichelman's discussion were Malays and Dayak, usually within the framework of a civilisational hierarchy that followed the standard primitive-modern continuum of colonial anthropologists. Tichelman deemed the Malays to be the most and the Dayak the least "advanced" of southeast Borneo's ethnic groups. The logic underpinning his judgement turned on the issue of whether and to what extent a group was able to adapt to "modernity", of which two kinds seemed to exist in his thinking: the one a beneficent sort doled out moderately and with deliberation by the Dutch, the other a harmful type pursued with reckless self-interest by less civilised people – in this case, Malays.[47]

In ways that resonate with British views of the Mughals of northern India, Dutch administrators, ever sensitive to rival forms of expansion, were both vigilant and scornful of groups whom they considered to be

45 Tichelman's only mention of these groups in his reports was as traders, and he noted that the Chinese were originally workers recruited from Singapore:
NL-HaNA, Tichelman 2.21.097.01, inv. nr. 13: *Memorie van Overgave*, Tanah Boemboe (1926), 28-29.
46 Ibid., 25. In an educational book published while Tichelman was an employee of the Indies Institute in Amsterdam, he made the distinction that was common in Dutch academic practice between anthropology, on the one hand (a science concerned with making physical distinctions between races), and ethnology on the other (a science concerned with comparing the lives of *natuurvolken*, or "primitive peoples", through the use of ethnographic materials – in other words, material culture): G.L. Tichelman, *Indonesische Bevolkingstypen* (Rotterdam and The Hague: Nijgh & Van Ditmar, 1948), 35.
47 NL-HaNA, Tichelman 2.21.097.01, inv. nr. 21: *Memorie van Overgave*, Barabai (1926-29), 48.

inferior colonisers of indigenous populations in the Indies. In Tichelman's schema, not only were the Dayak unprepared for the modern era, they were doomed to be destroyed by it, but not because of the Dutch. It was the Malays, in his opinion, who were responsible for erasing the Dayak as a distinct ethnic group. "Where our colonial civilising projects are oriented toward material improvements in the Western sense," Tichelman observed, "it must be remarked that the Hulu-Sungalese [local Malay] has adapted wonderfully well. He possesses a certain intelligence and can sometimes be very energetic. *He has a penchant for the new, the modern.*"[48]

So deeply was Tichelman convinced of these traits that the characterisation stuck in his mind for twenty years: in 1949, he quoted himself verbatim on this point in his introduction to the memoir of a retired Borneo official titled *Whites in Borneo* (*Blanken op Borneo*).[49] At the same time, Tichelman deemed the Malays of Hulu-Sungai an "*adat*-poor little folk" (*adat-arm volkje*) with "no style" or "sense of community" (*gemeenschapsgevoel*).[50] Perhaps this was why they ran roughshod over more coherently traditional (from a Dutch perspective) ethnic groups like the Dayak in both a biological sense, through pervasive intermarriage, and culturally, by religious and social "bastardisation".[51] The effect of Malay colonisation, in Tichelman's assessment, was to render the Dayak "more or less degenerate", robbing them of their customs, mores and language, not to mention their property.[52] Tichelman quoted the anthropologist and Dayak specialist A.W. Nieuwenhuis (1864-1953) to summarise the outcome of this unequal encounter between ethnic groups in Borneo as a "drama that plays out where a minimally developed, ethically low-standing but more energetic race such as the Borneo Malays lay their yoke over another [race] that possesses greater development and aptitude, but has a weaker character, such as the Dayak".[53]

Tichelman mused in later writings that the Dayak required protection from "overhasty modernisation".[54] Otherwise, he deemed them a docile

48 Ibid., 229 (my emphasis).

49 G.L. Tichelman, Introduction to *Blanken op Borneo: Herinneringen van J.J. Meier, oud-resident der Zuider- en Ooster-afdeeling van Borneo. Naverteld en van een inleiding voorzien door G.L. Tichelman* (Amsterdam: A.J.G. Strengholt, 1949), 15.

50 NL-HaNA, Tichelman 2.21.097.01, inv. nr. 21: *Memorie van Overgave*, Barabai (1926-29), 48.

51 NL-HaNA, Tichelman 2.21.097.01, inv. nr. 13: *Memorie van Overgave*, Tanah Boemboe (1926), 27; see also 24.

52 Ibid., 25.

53 NL-HaNA, Tichelman 2.21.097.01, inv. nr. 21: *Memorie van Overgave*, Barabai (1926-29), 52.

54 G.L. Tichelman, "Adat: De geestelijke erfenis der verre voorouders" (unpublished article, 1947): KITLV Special Collections, Collectie Tichelman, H814(645), 4.

people who saw in the "government official a magical and especially powerful person" wielding impressive authority over vast territories.[55] Whereas Tichelman considered the Malays to be of little ethnographic interest – on the grounds that they were "*adat*-poor" and in fact cannibalised other cultures – he remained agnostic as to the receptivity of Malays to Dutch colonisation in Borneo. Their rise to the top of local social hierarchies had caused no problems during his tenure, but he counselled his successor to remain vigilant.[56]

Paradoxically, due to their very fragility as a "race" and because they were widely considered by the Dutch to be the "original" (*oorspronkelijk*) population of Borneo, the Dayak were of great intellectual interest to Tichelman and his contemporaries as prime candidates for salvage ethnography. Indeed, Dutch anthropologists published widely on the Dayak in the early twentieth century.[57] Tichelman's hobby interest is even evident in his family album of 1928, which contains a group portrait of Dayak men.[58]

Given their unique status in Dutch colonial ethnography as *the* indigenous people of Borneo, why were no Dayak present to perform their ethnic distinctiveness in Tichelman's photographs of Queen's Birthday celebrations? The answer lies in the association between *Koninginnedag*, photography, colonial notions of modernity and ethnography in Tichelman's practice. Liberal colonial reformers hailed Queen Wilhelmina's reign as an ethical golden age, and annual festivals for her birthday in the Indies were celebrations of modernisation and development as much as they were of colonial authority.[59] At *Koninginnedag* celebrations an ethnographic way of seeing colonial subjects – dividing local populations into cohesive ethnic groups identifiable by visual traits – was united with a governing philosophy that promoted unity in diversity: portraying their distinctiveness as groups and their harmonious co-existence under Dutch rule. Queen's Birthday emerged in the Outer Islands as an occasion where the success of colonial reform was on display, and the role of the BB in orchestrating the event was a metaphor for the implementation of the Ethical Policy writ large.

Tichelman's writings became explicit on these points after he had left the civil service and given his Indies career further thought. In a retrospective

55 Ibid., 14.

56 NL-HaNA, Tichelman 2.21.097.01, inv. nr. 21: *Memorie van Overgave*, Barabai (1926-29), 229.

57 A survey of studies published in the first three decades of the twentieth century in the Netherlands' leading ethnology periodical, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, yields a large number of articles on the Dayak.

58 KITLV Special Collections, Album 188, inv. nr. 83623.

59 Protschky, "The empire illuminated".

of the BB composed in the mid-1950s, Tichelman applauded the expertise of his former colleagues (and himself) in matters of *adat*. He credited Dutch civil servants with minimising the trauma to the indigenous people of the Indies during the "revolutionary metamorphosis" of colonial reform.[60] "The heart of every people under the sun can be won with sympathy accompanied by knowledge and knowledge guided by sympathy", Tichelman held in another piece (unpublished), titled "Dealing with Indonesians" (*Omgang met Indonesiërs*).[61] His attitude exemplifies J.A.A. van Doorn's characterisation of the BB as a corps of "cultural conservationists" whose concern for preserving and codifying local customs sprang from a peculiar governmentality that braided fostering "sympathy" for indigenous subjects (rather than an assumption of equality with them) into pursuit of strong colonial governance.[62]

Tichelman's belief that it was the role of the BB to shield the people of the Indies from the shocks of modern ethical reform with sensitivity toward the cultural limits of diverse ethnic groups under colonial guidance imposed a regime of (in)visibility on certain communities during *Koninginnedag*, that most modern of colonial anniversaries. The Dayak, by virtue of their intransigent primitiveness, were incapable of joining the future that the Dutch envisioned, paternalistically, for their Indies possessions. They were worthy of ethnographic scrutiny, but such a gaze was purely academic: it had no administrative urgency. By contrast, an eye had to be kept on those groups that had responded well to reformist programs *and* managed to maintain their ethnic distinctiveness: the flourishing Malay majority of farmers and traders, Javanese who had taken up the challenge of resettlement, and the commercially successful communities of "Foreign Orientals". The latter two groups were of particular concern for colonial authorities because of the resentment they often attracted from locals. Thriving minorities were a cause both for colonial celebration and for vigilance, their robustness singling them out as potential threats to *rust en orde* as much as worthy recipients of ethical welfare.

60 G.L. Tichelman, unpublished writings, KITLV Special Collections, Collectie Tichelman, H814 (856), 2.

61 G.L. Tichelman, "Omgang met Indonesiërs" (unpublished article, 1945): KITLV Special Collections, Collectie Tichelman, KITLV H814(1118), 15.

62 J.A.A. van Doorn, *De laatste eeuw van Indië: Ontwikkeling en ondergang van een koloniaal project* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1995), 152-153. Notable exceptions to the conservationist majority in the BB were men like C. Snouck Hurgronje, who was in favour of radical assimilation (or "association" toward Western modes of governance) between the European civil service and their indigenous counterparts in government.

In Tichelman's photography, then, the Queen's Birthday did more than provide an "exhibition space" for Indies ethnic groups to perform their unity in diversity under a Dutch crown.[63] His camera brought these groups into a visual sphere that "marked the emergence of the modern world as spectacle",[64] where subjects and sovereigns alike were on display but different fields of power determined the visibility of participants. Dutch officials had positioned themselves as framers of ethnographic orders and as leaders of modernisation in the Indies in the name of ethical reform. G.L. Tichelman's camera refracted the discriminatory vision of a civil service in the thrall of an applied ethnography that was used at the governmental level to decide who would be part of an ethical future (Malays, Javanese and "Foreign Orientals") and whom that program would bypass (Dayak).

The human centre of colonial photography

My discussion so far has focused on the ethnographic and governing practices that Tichelman's *Koninginnedag* photographs illuminate. In this section I examine the contexts of their display – the family albums and official reports – and the flexible modes in which Tichelman deployed his photographs between them. Doing so draws attention to what Elizabeth Edwards has characterised as "the human centre" of colonial photograph collections. Focusing on "individual collections, cohering around private interest[s]", Edwards argues, can decentre the ethnographic photograph as a stable category of colonial knowledge production.[65] Taking this approach a step further, I contend that to unsettle the colonial meanings invested in photographs of indigenous people is to examine them as egodocuments – as autobiographical sources on the photographer – and not just as outcomes of colonial governing and scholarly projects.[66] Importantly, I do so with

63 For a discussion of "exhibition space", see Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 184. Roslyn Poignant uses a cognate concept, "show space": Roslyn Poignant, "The making of professional 'savages': From P.T. Barnum (1883) to the *Sunday Times* (1998)," in *Photography's Other Histories*, ed. Christopher Pinney and Nicolas Peterson (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 55-84 at 56.

64 Poignant, "The making of professional 'savages'," 56.

65 Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 28, 30, 194.

66 On family photographs as ego documents, see Susie Protschky, "Tea cups, cameras and family life: Picturing domesticity in elite European and Javanese family photographs from the Netherlands Indies, c. 1900-1942," *History of Photography* 36:1 (2012), 44-65 at 45-46; Martha Langford, *Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife of Memory in Photographic Albums* (Montreal and Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 41.

Tichelman's official photographs, not just with the more obviously autobiographical family albums.

Tichelman's Queen's Birthday photographs are currently divided between two custodial institutions in the Netherlands: his family albums are held with his private and unpublished materials at the KITLV in Leiden, while the photographs in his logbooks are stored with his government files at the National Archives in The Hague. Therefore, examining Tichelman's *Koninginnedag* photographs together, as I have done in the preceding section, reunites sources that have been separated according to the archival genres of "personal" and "official". Indeed, archives – with their differentiated functions and various ordering orthodoxies – tend to compartmentalise the more complex practices of the photographers whose works they store.[67] Attentiveness to the early stages in the "cultural biography" of Tichelman's *Koninginnedag* photographs, however, restores his complex presence to images that have been subsumed in subsequent archival practices.[68]

Tichelman's own ordering has clearly determined the current archival locations of his photographs. His decisions about whether to place pictures in his family albums for a "private" audience or in his logbooks for colleagues to view have shaped where they are currently stored and thus the contexts in which they are now viewed. Importantly, there is nothing intrinsic to the *Koninginnedag* photographs examined here that determines their genre, since they focus on public participants in Queen's Birthday celebrations rather than on private modes of commemoration. The genre of these photographs is decided not by subject, then, so much as by different spectators – the circle of intimates, the co-worker – that Tichelman envisioned for them. It was only *after* their taking that the more precise meaning of Tichelman's photographs became fixed through their distribution across different venues according to their intended audience. Thus, while all his photographs may have been made with an ethnographic as well as a governing eye, only some become "family" photographs (the *kuda képang* snaps), while others traversed two genres, including an official venue (the *erepoort* images).

67 Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 29 and also 83-106; Christopher Morton and Elizabeth Edwards, "Introduction," in *Photography, Anthropology and History: Expanding the Frame*, ed. Christopher Morton and Elizabeth Edwards (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 1-26 at 8.

68 Igor Kopytoff, "The cultural biography of things: Commoditization as process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64-94; and in the same volume, Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the politics of value," 3-63.

Drawing on John Tagg, Christopher Pinney has argued that the difference between genres of colonial photography is often "the field of power around the camera".[69] In the case of Tichelman's *Koninginnedag* photographs, the festival defines a unified general field – a public, official occasion celebrating the endurance of Dutch rule under a royal figurehead, and the ability of the monarch to symbolically unite not just a diversity of subject peoples, but also three strands of colonial thought: what constitutes "ethical" governance; the notion of modernity as a European bequest (borne by colonisers, received by only some of the colonised); and the multiple utilities of ethnographic ways of seeing. Tichelman himself – with his ethical convictions, administrative responsibilities and ethnographic predilections – works through these strands of colonial thought in his photography. He does so in a way that is phenomenological; his practice becomes "disciplined" only once the photographs are placed in context(s). Tichelman thus distributed aspects of his thought and practice differentially in his photography, as well as between his photographs and written reports, and that is also how his ideas became refined and reduced – or indeed, invisible.

Therefore, in his *kuda képang* photographs we see Tichelman foreground his ethnographic self even as he frames Javanese participants as ethnographic subjects. In his *erepoort* photographs, we see Tichelman's proprietorship of "his" district on display: in the family albums, the images comprise a virtual tour of temporary, festive decorations in Tichelman's local district; in his official reports, the photographs summarise his spatial as well as intellectual command of the territory and the diversity of subjects it contains. The photographic absence of the Dayak on *Koninginnedag* – when all the queen's colonial subjects are otherwise assembled, and when this group warrants so much attention in Tichelman's written reports – suggests his inability to envision a place for them in the modern present and future in which he situates himself and selected local communities. The Dayak remain compartmentalised as an intellectual interest and an administrative irrelevance.

Tichelman's *Koninginnedag* photographs could be flexibly deployed across genres for two reasons: the first relates to the nature of photography as a technology, and the second to the historical context in which Tichelman practiced. To begin with the first: normally, discussion would turn here to the replicability of photographs – their ability to be endlessly reproduced from a single negative. Tichelman placed images of the triumphal arches

69 Pinney, *Camera Indica*, 96; John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 30.

over the Arab quarter in both his family albums and logbooks, but these photographs were not copies made from the same negative, they were two *similar* photographs of the same scene. Exact replication was not Tichelman's aim, despite the technical capacity of photography to provide two images from the same negative. We can only speculate on the reason why, but the simplest explanation is that Tichelman had many photographs of the *erepoorten* to choose from. (Another indication of how significant the arches were to his notion of the success of the festival.) The materiality of photographs – their status as objects as well as images – is therefore what distinguishes them as evidence, illustration and modes of commemoration in this instance.[70] Paintings and hand-drawn images have the same quality of being able to capture a scene at different moments and from various angles, but in the early twentieth century only photographs could do so extensively and cheaply. Photographs also evoked a quality that no other mode of visual representation could claim, that of indexicality – of ostensibly corresponding exactly to an objective reality, a thing that was or an event that happened.[71]

Looking at the *Koninginnedag* photographs in their albums and logbooks today, the materiality that makes them portable and hence interchangeable is plainly evident. Tichelman was responsible for physically sorting through which of them would go into what venue. His hands intervened to fix the photographs to the pages, and to attempt to impose a stable meaning according to what form of reportage they served – autobiographical or administrative. In both venues, however, the photographs resist the permanence of being placed; edges rise off the page where the adhesive was unevenly applied. The imperfect work of Tichelman's hands thus reminds us of his former presence – as the photographer, the man with the glue, and the fixer of meanings – and of the fact that the photographs could have ended up anywhere, to illustrate a number of narratives. The vexed question posed by Geoffrey Batchen of *when* precisely a photograph is "made" thus bears on this analysis. Is it at the point of conceptualisation, at the moment when the shutter is pressed, when the image is developed, or at the time when the photograph is "shown"?[72] Only the photographer can speak definitively to the conceptualisation of an image, and G.L. Tichelman is not available to

70 Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, "Introduction: Photographs as objects," in *Photographs, Objects, Histories: On the Materiality of Images*, ed. Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 1-15; Geoffrey Batchen, *Each Wild Idea: Writing, Photography, History* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: MIT Press, 2001), 60, 61, 77.

71 Tagg, *Burden of Representation*, 3; Pinney, *Camera Indica*, 70; Edwards, *Raw History*, 182.

72 Batchen, *Each Wild Idea*, 83.

illuminate us on his thoughts. (Nor did he write much on his photographic practices, which is surprising given his prolific output on so many other subjects.[73]) We can only rely on the outcomes of his various efforts – what is captured in the camera's lens, replete with the "excess" of unintended content and meanings[74] – and on the manipulations that Tichelman made with the objects that became his photographs.

The different meanings that accrue to his *erepoort* photographs in particular are shaped by the contexts in which they were displayed. In the family albums, this context largely comprises other images, whereas in the logbooks it is overwhelming written text. The captions to the photographs, incidentally, also signal differences. Handwriting suffices in the family albums – indeed, makes them authentically "personal" by bringing the trace of Tichelman's hand directly into view. Typewritten captions in the logbooks mechanically efface Tichelman, providing a stamp of objectivity to the reports they illustrate.

Despite making the Asian population of southeast Borneo the subject of his reports, it is Tichelman who is everywhere in his logbooks; his own preconceptions pervade the ostensibly impartial observations that he makes about the peoples of Tanah Boemboe and Barabai. Less surprisingly, Tichelman is also everywhere in his family albums. Yet this omnipresence brings us (at last) to the second reason why his *Koninginnedag* photographs could be flexibly deployed across personal and official genres: because of the historically particular public and private spheres that European civil servants in the Indies occupied in the early twentieth century. Tichelman's family photographs reveal an era when (specifically, a man's) work and leisure were not so rigidly separated – in spatial, temporal and, indeed, intellectual terms – as they often are today, and when "family" albums therefore did not evoke the narrower genre they have now become. Tichelman's albums combine images of his private life (family dinners, afternoon teas, galas and tennis parties, all in the closed company of Europeans) with

73 The exception is a short piece, never published, on photographing children: G.L. Tichelman, "Kinderfoto's en kinderalbum" (1936), KITLV Special Collections, Collectie G.L. Tichelman, H814(247). That Tichelman wrote little on photography is odd given his penchant for it, and the fact that other Dutchmen in the Indies were beginning to write on the peculiarities of photography in the tropics: see, for example, H.F. Tillema, "Filmen en fotografeeren in de tropische rimboe," *Nederlandsch-Indië Oud en Nieuw* 16 (1930-1931), 97-128.

74 For the notion of "excess" developed, see Christopher Pinney, "Introduction: 'How the other half …'," in *Photography's Other Histories*, ed. Christopher Pinney and Nicolas Peterson (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 1-14 at 6. For an example, see in the same volume Michael Aird, "Growing up with Aborigines," 23-39.

snapshots of his activities "on the job", both as a colonial official (visits with local elites, tours through rural communities) and as an ethnographer (images of customary houses and tribesmen in traditional garb).

Importantly, Tichelman's family albums are as strong a comment on the implementation of the Ethical Policy in southeast Borneo as are his written reports. In Barabai particularly, Tichelman captured the benevolent impact of Dutch rule with his camera: the advent of modern amenities (electric lamp posts, a new cinema, a Shell petrol pump); signs of prosperity (thriving markets, a small restaurant); edifices of Western governance (the post office, fire brigade, police station); and improvements to local welfare (a new hospital, renovated irrigation works, and aid in response to a *bandjir*, or flash flood). The blending of intellectual, leisure and official pursuits in Tichelman's family albums thus gives a peculiarly masculine expression to a genre that became associated in Europe and North America with the bourgeois, feminine work of articulating the private sphere.[75] His album does not follow the pattern of visible homes and invisible workplaces that several scholars have identified as typical to white middle-class family photography.[76] The "office" of the male European civil servant in the Outer Provinces was in his place of residence, and also comprised "his" entire district; this informed particular ways of seeing selves as well as the world "outside".

The blending of genres in Tichelman's family albums betrays the distinctions that he may have tried to impose between photographic venues for his private and professional audiences. His family albums, like his logbooks, are replete with Tichelman's professional identity (as a civil servant), intellectual hobbies (as an ethnographer) and political morals (as a proponent of ethical rule). His placement of *Koninginnedag* photos in his family albums and logbooks situates him in both cases as chief agent in a narrative of intellectual, moral and administrative action in which ethnographic observation went hand in hand with good governance. In Tichelman's logbooks, the field of his vision is simply narrower than in his family albums, focused on the demands of colonial governance. In these reports a miscellany of subjects have been identified and then orchestrated to perform in unison for an occasion that celebrated an empire joined under a Dutch monarch. The human centre of those photographs

75 Deborah Chambers, "Family as place: Family photograph albums and the domestication of public and private space," in *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, ed. Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan (London and New York: I.B. Tauris and Co. Ltd, 2003), 96-114 at 97.

76 Chambers, "Family as place," 98; Gillian Rose, "Photographs and domestic spacings: A case study," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 28:1 (March 2003): 5-18 at 6, 8.

is a man who saw himself as a steward, who used ethnographic ways of seeing as a strategy for ethical governing.

Conclusions

G.L. Tichelman's Queen's Birthday photographs from his Borneo period reveal unique perspectives on how ethnography as a discipline, ethical governance as a colonial policy and photography as a representational technology and way of seeing developed in tandem in the Outer Provinces during the early twentieth century. More so even than in the Netherlands, where the festival originated as a panacea for social schisms, *Koninginnedag* in the Indies provided a unique opportunity for Dutch authorities to orchestrate unity among a diversity of local ethnic groups, and thus to demonstrate both the extent of the Netherlands' empire and the efficacy of Dutch rule. For amateur photography enthusiasts like Tichelman, the camera provided a unique means of commemorating the outcomes of their governing labours on this public occasion. It did so in ways that brought administrative concerns about distinguishing between local communities together with ethnographic methods for making these distinctions. And it did so with reference to a particular vision of modernity that underpinned both ethicism as a colonial governing philosophy and ethnography as an academic discipline. Modernity, in this vision, was a project under official construction, carried out by skilled administrators and sanctioned by enlightened royalty. It evoked a future that was not for everyone. Some of Wilhelmina's subjects would be left in the past, a place that the camera could not go. On *Koninginnedag* – a festival that celebrated modern, ethical colonialism as much as it did royal tradition and Dutch authority – photography was in service to the future. In Tichelman's practice, an ethical administrator's idea of modernity imposed regimes of visibility on the queen's colonial subjects, and in doing so outlined the fate of Borneo's different ethnic communities.

Tichelman's collected photographic and written works suggest that family photographs – not just official images – can be reviewed as ethnographic labour, and that ethnographic photography was part of a colonial way of seeing that permeated private life, intellectual endeavour and public work. Further, Tichelman's *Koninginnedag* photographs capture intentions that may not have been unitary at the point when they were taken. Having been made by a man immersed in the moments they commemorate, and with his mind on several "jobs" at once, the photographs are necessarily "contigu-

ous with the 'life' from which they are extracted".[77] They reveal multiple ways of seeing – indeed, an excess of Tichelman's vision – because the camera responds mechanically to a trigger with a human centre. Viewing across the archives that hold Tichelman's family and official photographs reveals his techniques of thinking with the camera through imitating his act of reviewing the prints to decide which would be displayed, where and for what audience. Doing so demonstrates how photographic genres constitute "a social contract for expressing appropriate forms for different kinds of statement" and "shapes of expectation".[78] Tichelman's afterthoughts about audiences for his *Koninginnedag* photographs were part of a longer process of considering ethical projects, ethnographic orders and modernity in Borneo that had begun long before he reached for his camera and that continued to occupy him for the rest of his working life.

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77 Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 9.

78 Ibid., 182. On the importance of the spectator in colonial forms of photography, see also Jane Lydon, *Eye Contact: Photographing Indigenous Australians* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005); Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, transl. Rela Mazali and Ruvik Daniel (New York: Zone Books, 2008).

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4 Saving the children?

The Ethical Policy and photographs of colonial atrocity during the Aceh War

Paul Bijl

Introduction

In the spring of 1904, less than three years after Queen Wilhelmina's famous exhortation that the Dutch should answer a moral calling with respect to the peoples of the Netherlands Indies, the Dutch colonial army made eight photographs depicting the mass deaths that resulted from its assaults on a number of fortified villages on the island of Sumatra.[1] One of the most arresting aspects of these photographs is a number of surviving infants that sit between the dead bodies of their family members and neighbours, while above and around them soldiers are posing for the photographer.

I argue in this chapter that the meaning of these photographs within contemporary Dutch (colonial) society was far from clear. I will first discuss these photographs and some of the conflicting and confused responses to the expedition during which they were taken. Next, I will place these images in the context of European visual culture, both in Europe and in the Indies, specifically focusing on imagery of children. Finally, I will show that the ambiguous reception of these images was partly due to a tension in European ideas about the nature of the (native) child and its relation to the (colonial) state.

The photographs

Figures 1 and 2 depict two of the eight photographs of atrocity that were taken during the expedition. It is in these two images that children are most visible.[2] The first was made on 14 June 1904 in the village of Koetö Réh,

1 Queen Wilhelmina's annual "speech from the throne" (*troonrede*), or address to the Dutch parliament, can be found in the minutes of the Dutch parliament: *Verslag der Handelingen van de Staten-Generaal*, 17 September 1901, 1, www.statengeneraaldigitaal.nl.

2 For a more elaborate discussion of all of these photographs, see Paul Bijl, *Emerging Memory: Photographs of Colonial Atrocity in Dutch Cultural Remembrance* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014).

Figure 1 H.M. Neeb, Koetö Réh, 14 June 1904

Source: Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, nr. 60009090

as it was then called by the Dutch, or Kuta Rih, as it is called in Indonesia today. The second photograph was made in the village of Koetö Lengat Baroe (Kutalengat Baru) on 24 June 1904. Both villages were located on the island of Sumatra, in the Alas land, then part of the colonial administrative district of Aceh and its dependencies. The photographer was a man called H.M. Neeb (1870-1933), a medical officer of the Dutch colonial army who took 173 photographs during a military expedition to the Gajo and Alas lands as part of the last phase of the Aceh War (1873-1914).[3] The elite troops (*marechaussees*, or gendarmes) of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (*Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indisch Leger*, or KNIL) marched from 8 February to 23 July, their main goal being the establishment of Dutch colonial authority in these regions. In the process they ruthlessly quelled all resistance,

3 The most comprehensive history of the Aceh War is Paul van 't Veer, *De Atjeh-oorlog* (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 1969). The military report made of this expedition is G.C.E. van Daalen, "Verslag van den tocht naar de Gajo- en Alaslanden in de maanden Februari tot en met Juli 1904 onder den luitenant-kolonel van den generalen staf G.C.E. van Daalen, met 4 kaarten en 17 bijlagen," *Indisch Militair Tijdschrift: Extra-Bijlagen* 14 (1905): 1-194. Most of the information given here about the expedition is taken from these two texts, and from Anneke Groeneveld, "'Excursie naar de Gajō- en Alaslanden, 1904': een visueel-antropologische analyse van de foto's van legerarts H.M. Neeb" (Masters diss., Open University, 2001).

Figure 2 H.M. Neeb, Koetö Lengat Baroe, 24 June 1904

Source: Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, nr. 60009305.

which resulted in the death of twenty per cent of the Alas people.[4] Of the more than 3000 villagers killed during this expedition, 654 fell in Kutalengat Baru and 561 in Kuta Rih. Among the victims in the latter village, 130 bodies were identified in the Dutch military reports as having belonged to children.

As the troops approached their destination, villagers built the fortifications that are visible in the photographs and on which the soldiers (mostly natives of other islands) stand and sit together with their Dutch officers, including the commander G.C.E. van Daalen (1863-1930), who is standing to the far left of the first photograph. In this same image, scattered across the ground, lie the bodies of perhaps eight villagers who were shot or cut down. Some are barely visible. Also on the village ground, just in front of the palisade, stands a *marechaussee* with to his right a child sitting in a cage-like constellation of poles. In the second photograph children are visible as well, with one sitting in front of the structure on the left and one at the foot of a number of poles leaning against the roof of the building.

4 This figure was based on the fatalities in the military report made of the expedition and the estimate of the number of inhabitants at the time that was made by Akifumi Iwabuchi in his 1994 study of the Alas: Akifumi Iwabuchi, *The People of the Alas Valley: A Study of an Ethnic Group of Northern Sumatra* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). See also Van Daalen, "Verslag van den tocht".

The Aceh photographs, as I shall refer to them here, have shocked and intrigued many observers in the Netherlands and Indonesia in the last hundred years, and have been republished many times in the press and in history books. They have also been (re)staged in fiction films, taken up in an art project, and been the subject of television documentaries. I have written about their role in Dutch and Indonesian cultural memory elsewhere.[5] As well as the visual confrontation with death that they offer, the first photograph in particular is important for having been widely disseminated. For both supporters and opponents of colonialism, the images can be read as a symbol of colonial power structures.

The first photograph, which was reprinted most often, shows, in the words of the eighteenth-century philosopher and art critic G.E. Lessing, a "pregnant moment". The instructions that had been given to Van Daalen by the governor of Aceh, J.B. van Heutsz, were clear: "to establish our authority in those landscapes".[6] The photograph can be read as a direct response to this assignment. Officer of Health Neeb, besides the photographer also responsible for the troops' mobile hospital, and Lieutenant-Colonel van Daalen gave the image its first caption: "Koetö Réh; the place where the *marechaussees* penetrated".[7] Above the child and its guard, two soldiers are standing as if they were entering the village at the moment when the picture was taken. Lessing wrote that "[p]ainting can use only a single moment of an action in its coexisting compositions and must therefore choose the one which is most suggestive and from which the preceding and succeeding actions are most easily comprehensible".[8] The moment of "penetration" that is staged here – and we know that it is staged, as two other photographs that chronologically preceded this one show colonial soldiers standing on the village grounds – suggests not only that the troops were doing as ordered, but also shows the forward, progressive movement of colonialism through lands that were seen as lagging behind on a global timescale.

5 Paul Bijl, "Colonial Memory and Forgetting in the Netherlands and Indonesia," *Journal of Genocide Research* 14:3-4 (2012): 441-61.

6 Van Daalen, "Verslag van den tocht", 122.

7 "Lijst van fotogrammen, vervaardigd door den Officier van Gezondheid der 1ste klasse H.M. Neeb, gedurende de excursie naar de Gajō- en Alaslanden, van 8 Februari tot 23 Juli 1904," *Notulen van de Algemeene en Directievergaderingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen* XLII (1904): CVIII-CXVI. The translations in this chapter are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

8 G.E. Lessing, *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, trans. E.A. McCormick (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962), 78.

This was the consensus among Europeans in the Netherlands and the Indies, including those in the army: they had a responsibility to subject these people in order to liberate them from their old habits and customs, from themselves. Elsbeth Locher-Scholten's definition of the Ethical Policy – "a policy aimed at acquiring de facto political control of the entire Indonesian archipelago and the development of both country and people under Dutch leadership and after Western example" – is relevant here.[9] Yet how exactly these people and their children should be propelled into modernity, and whether images like these reflected a desirable outcome of colonial policy, proved to be a matter of fierce debate in the Netherlands.

Mixed responses

Taken in the spring of 1904, these images were soon after disseminated in various ways. Neeb and Van Daalen sent copies of the photographs to several institutes: the Batavian Society for Arts and Sciences, the Royal Military Academy in Breda, the Museum of Ethnology in Rotterdam, and the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden. In December 1904, the images were discussed during the board meeting of the Batavian Society, which exhibited them in the colonial capital, Batavia, in February 1905. In that same year, one of the officers who had participated in the expedition, lieutenant J.C.J. Kempees, published a book in which several of the eight photographs of murdered villagers were printed and which could be bought in Dutch bookstores.[10] Yet even before these photographs were publicly displayed their existence had been known through newspaper reports made by a journalist writing for the *Deli Courant* under the acronym M.T.V.[11] These articles were reprinted by several other newspapers, in the Netherlands as well as the Indies. The following description is of Tjané Oekön-Toenggöl, which was attacked on 21 April:

> The next day dr. Neeb took photographs with his apparatus in and around the *benteng* [fortification]. Then the destruction could be observed calmly.

9 Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten: vijf studies over koloniaal denken en doen van Nederlanders in de Indonesische archipel 1877-1942* (Utrecht: HES, 1981), 213.

10 J.C.J. Kempees, *De tocht van overste Van Daalen door de Gajo-, Alas- en Bataklanden: 8 Februari tot 23 Juli 1904* (Amsterdam: Dalmeijer, 1905).

11 M.T.V. "De ellende van den oorlog," *Deli Courant*, 23 June and 4 July 1904.

> Before the gates the largest piles of bodies were lying. At the entrance was a man whose chest they had half ruptured and whose intestines one could see, all dried out. A terrible smell of blood and bodies was all around. Another man, who in his fear of death had wanted to jump over the pointed fence, had impaled himself. His corpse hung on the bamboo shafts, his head backwards, his legs warped; in the position of his desperate flight he found death … A wounded enemy with shattered breastbone and shot-through chest was dying while rattling and groaning.

The descriptions made by M.T.V. offer the first example of the mixed nature of the responses to the killings. What is, first of all, ambiguous about his descriptions is the combination of aesthetic pleasure (in the Kantian sense)[12] and shocked repulsion. At moments, M.T.V. seems to delight in the visual spectacle offered in the massacred villages, for instance when he writes about the village of Kutalengat Baru (depicted on the second photograph):

> The saddest image, however, was provided by the *trous-de-loup* and the northeastern salient, where the defence had been the most powerful. 20 to 30 corpses and wounded, all mixed up and on top of each other, colourful through clothing, naked skin, open wounds, blood stains and blood stripes on the sandy subsoil.

The form of this sentence can be read as an icon of what it represented: it is analogous to its meaning. The complicated, barely grammatical structure and its fragmentary syntax enhance the sentence's evocation of a pile of dead and living pieces of meat in which individual bodies no longer exist. M.T.V. seems to have had an aesthetic experience, disinterestedly admiring the form of what he saw, also because of its colour patterns and intriguing mixture of textures. Yet on the other hand he describes the soldiers of the colonial army as "calm, icy and composed, with horror on their faces, speaking softly". Far from experiencing the bodies of the dead villagers as having a purposiveness without a purpose,[13] these soldiers appear not to have been struck by the "beautiful suffering" they had caused in the same way M.T.V. was.[14] Instead, they seem to have been deeply affected not by beauty, but by horror.

12 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

13 Ibid.

14 On the notion of "beautiful suffering", see Mark Reinhardt ed., *Beautiful Suffering: Photography and the Traffic in Pain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

What is striking, next, is that M.T.V. sees and says he sees the scene he witnesses *as an image*. He does not only observe the bodies of the villagers, but also, from the very start, their representation. That he indeed looks at the villages as such becomes apparent if we consider the title of his articles: "The Misery of War". This phrase can of course be approached as a sign to denote the idea of actual suffering during wars, yet in the early twentieth century it was also the name of a genre in European visual culture in which artists like Jacques Callot (1592-1635) and Francisco Goya (1746-1828) had made renowned series of the Thirty Years' War and the Peninsular War, respectively. By converting the bodies of the villagers not only into images, but moreover into specimens of an artistic genre which had developed in Europe over centuries, M.T.V. transposed these killings through aestheticising them to a timeless realm of human suffering in which war was a natural occurrence that lay outside human agency. For this is what art in the European idealist tradition aimed to do: to show the universal through the particular. Goya, for instance, did not see his work as journalism but as showing what happened to humanity if it abandoned reason. Different factors, however – such as that these articles were printed in a newspaper and thus firmly located in the recent past, and that here the medium of choice was not painting or drawing, but the indexical medium of photography – placed the bodies of the villagers back in history. It is this ambiguous position between time and timelessness that can also be found in several responses in the Netherlands.

There, particularly members of parliament on the right of the political spectrum saw the occurrences in the Gajo and Alas lands as precisely "Miseries of War": sad but unavoidable. At first sight, this is also the message we can read in Queen Wilhelmina's speech to the Dutch Parliament (*troonrede*) of 1904. Wilhelmina's exact words during her speech of 17 September 1901, in which she officially introduced the Dutch Ethical Policy, had been:

> As a Christian Power, the Netherlands is obliged to better arrange the legal position of native Christians in the Indies archipelago, to lend the Christian mission a firmer foothold, and to make the whole policy of the government fully aware of the fact that the Netherlands has to fulfil a moral vocation *vis-à-vis* the people of these regions.[15]

15 *Verslag der Handelingen van de Staten-Generaal*, 17 September 1901, 1, www.statengeneraaldigitaal.nl.

She mentioned three specific policies: an investigation into the "diminished welfare" (*mindere welvaart*) of the Javanese, the protection of coolies, and the "pacification" of Sumatra. It is precisely this latter piece of colonial policy, now known as the Aceh War, to which she returned three years later in her speech of 20 September 1904, with the following words:

> The further confirmation of what until now was achieved in northern Sumatra moved forward again in a not unimportant manner. In view of this, a more forceful action in the Gajo and Alas lands could not fail to occur. That with this unarmed people also fell is regretted by Me, though it was not preventable.[16]

Sad but unavoidable, one could summarize, but with its many modifiers (further, until now, more forceful) and negations and double negations (not preventable, could not fail, not unimportant), this paragraph makes the situation in Sumatra visible and invisible at the same time, smoothing things over while also suggesting a number of alternatives: *Could* the more forceful action have failed to occur? *Was* the fall of unarmed people not preventable? It is, therefore, a substantially less assertive speech than its 1901 predecessor. The oration shows unease with what had happened, and the difficulty of finding the right words. The disquiet perceptible in this speech also lurks in the background of many other responses.

Wilhelmina was not the only one in the Netherlands on whom the reports from the military and the press about what had happened in the Gajo and Alas lands had had a disturbing effect. In the Dutch Parliament, several members were very critical of the Dutch actions. Some, like the Catholic MP Victor de Stuers (1843-1916), returned to these and other massacres that had occurred in the Indies year after year, every time the budget for the Indies was on the agenda. De Stuers seemed to have been unaware of the fact that photographs had been made of the killings, for he said that "during that expedition nine engineers and a botanist were present but no photographer". However, just like M.T.V., he also imagines the villages as depicted in photographs, for he says that

> [i]f I had been able to get photographs of the hecatombs that had occurred there, I would not have spoken a word; I would simply have shown the photographs to the Members and I would have been eloquent through

16 *Verslag der Handelingen van de Staten-Generaal*, 20 September 1904, 1, www.statengeneraaldigitaal.nl.

> my silence! These photographs would have worked stronger on the nerves than my description.[17]

De Stuers had, on the one hand, spoken about "a history of murder" and called the Dutch colonial army a gang of bloodhounds, yet he also said that the "natural peoples" of the Indies should be treated "as children, with softness and patience". This goes to show that even the most critical of parliamentarians did not doubt the goals of the ethical project as a whole. Whereas some denounced Dutch colonialism's scope and means, all speakers agreed on the "historical task" of what Kipling had called, in the British imperial context, "the white man's burden".

Here we see a further ambiguity in Dutch responses to the occurrences in Aceh. The aporia in De Stuers' reasoning and the central tension in Wilhelmina's speeches was that they limited their concept of violence to direct, physical violence, and did not see the Ethical Policy as violence of an epistemic nature, to borrow from Gayatri Spivak. Spivak describes epistemic violence as "the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other".[18] Similarly, in a groundbreaking article, Henk Schulte Northolt has discussed the Netherlands Indies as a "state of violence" because of the many wars, repressive labour regimes, brutal state responses to local resistance, and the close ties between the colonial administration and local criminals who were given free rein in exchange for their services.[19] An analysis of these latter forms of violence, I want to argue, should be supplemented with what we, again with Spivak, can call the various forms of "approved violence" that made up the Ethical Policy.[20] The anxiety discernible in the words of Wilhelmina and De Stuers was that the violence as perpetrated during the expedition and visible in photographs was an integral part of the Ethical Policy they supported.

The Ethical Policy's emphasis on education, health care and poverty reduction was, however, not a phenomenon limited to the colonies: European authorities in the nineteenth century had directed similar types of

17 *Verslag der Handelingen van de Staten-Generaal*, 25 November 1904, 270, www.statengeneraaldigitaal.nl.

18 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present* (Calcutta: Seagul, 1999), 266.

19 Henk Schulte Nordholt, "A genealogy of violence," in *Roots of Violence in Indonesia: Contemporary Violence in Historical Perspective*, ed. Freek Colombijn and J. Thomas Lindblad (Leiden: KITLV, 2002), 33-61.

20 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 123.

interventionist impulses towards the population living within the borders of their own nations,[21] and also towards children. In the same Queen's speech from 1904 quoted above, for example, Wilhelmina announced that in the coming parliamentary year a piece of child welfare legislation would be finalised (the so-called *Kinderwetten*, or Children's Laws), which would make it possible for the state to deprive people of their parental rights if they did not take proper care of their children. Yet before I elaborate on this connection between state intervention, particularly aimed at children, between the Indies and the Netherlands, I want to discuss the position of the Aceh photographs within the context of European visual culture, focusing specifically on the representation of children.

Children in European visual culture

How did the Aceh photographs relate to European visual culture? Whereas art historians have extensively researched European imagery of atrocity, and also images from colonial Indonesia have attracted a growing share of scholarly attention in recent decades, different colonial and metropolitan archives are still seldom brought together.[22] It is, however, precisely in the comparison with visual culture in Europe that the specificity of colonial visual culture can be located.

From a formal perspective, the photograph of Kuta Rih (Figure 1) in particular can be connected to European imagery depicting victory. The image can be divided horizontally and has two planes: the soldiers standing on the wall, and the villagers dispersed on the ground. The vertical order of the soldiers rising high above the diagonal chaos of the villagers' bodies makes for a perfect icon of colonialism in the Peircian sense, that is, a sign which exhibits a similarity or analogy to the subject of discourse.[23]

21 Maarten Kuitenbrouwer, *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism: Colonies and Foreign Policy, 1870-1902* (New York and Oxford: Berg/St Martin's Press, 1991). Translated by Hugh Beyer. First published as *Nederland en de opkomst van het moderne imperialisme: Koloniën en buitenlandse politiek 1870-1902* (1985), 218. See also Liesbeth van de Grift's research project "Brave New Worlds: Internal Colonization in Europe, 1900-1940"; Liesbeth van de Grift, "The Dutch Wieringermeer Polder as an Experimental Garden of Social Planning, 1918-1940" (paper presented at the European Social Science History Conference, Glasgow, United Kingdom, 2012).

22 A notable exception is Susie Protschky, *Images of the Tropics: Environment and Visual Culture in Colonial Indonesia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2011).

23 C.S. Peirce, "Logic as semiotic: The theory of signs," in *The Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, ed. Justus Buchler (New York: Dover, 1955), 98-115.

Figure 3 **H.W. Hoogkamer after J. Jelgerhuis, *Victory at Leuven on 12 August 1831*, c. 1833**

Source: Collection National Military Museum, Soesterberg: No. 00117496

In the Netherlands in the nineteenth century, a horizontally layered spatial organisation was a well-known form for portraying victory in art. The last European war in which the Dutch had participated, the one which they started themselves in 1830 in an attempt to thwart Belgian independence, had yielded several lithographs of victories over Belgian troops in which conquering Dutch commanders tower over Flemish cities. In *Victory at Leuven* from 1831 by Johannes Jelgerhuis, for instance, the Prince of Orange (later King William II) sits on his horse on a hill, with below him the fallen city just visible between large clouds of smoke from cannon that had just finished firing (Figure 3). This vertical organisation also returned in Dutch paintings about the Indies, for instance in Nicolaas Pieneman's famous depiction of the arrest of Prince Dipo Negoro by colonial forces in 1830, in which the latter is standing a few steps below the Dutch General H.M. de Kock, who is pointing him towards a carriage that will take the rebel to his exile.

The Kuta Rih photograph's depiction of utter victory and defeat and of absolute hierarchy, however, was particularly evocative of the period of modern imperialism between 1870 and 1914, of which the Aceh War was part. Just a few years before the photograph was taken, in 1901, an almost identical setting had been photographed, of Dutch soldiers standing on the wall of another Acehnese fortification, this time shrouded in smoke but also with several dead bodies lying at their feet. This photograph had been published in the Protestant family magazine *Eigen haard* (literally, "Own hearth", but best translated as "No place like home").[24]

Yet while from these perspectives the Aceh photographs seem to fit the genres of Dutch depictions of victory in both Europe and the colonies, it is much less clear how the children fit into the visual culture of the time. In Dutch visual culture, both in Europe and in the Indies, children were never depicted as the lone survivors of families, with their killers looming above their heads. Of course, children in distress had been part of European visual culture for many centuries. Erika Langmuir, who sees vulnerability as one of the most important themes in European depictions of children, writes:

> Since earliest Antiquity, innumerable artifacts have recorded parents' efforts to protect their children from danger, their desire to mourn and commemorate the dead when such efforts have proved unavailing, and their need for consolation. Some images, conversely, depict hapless children's willful murder by adults – in the Christian era most often deployed to evoke pity for the innocent victims.[25]

From the Christian tradition, episodes of (attempted) child murder are indeed plenty, such as the tales of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis, of God killing all first-born children of Egypt during the last plague in Exodus, and, most importantly, of the massacre of the innocents by Herod in the Gospel of Matthew. By 1904, hundreds of years of European visual culture had yielded countless depictions of the latter tale by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Cornelis Cornelisz. van Haarlem, and Peter Paul Rubens, among others.[26] Yet for none of these Biblical narratives does the photograph make a fitting illustration. Closest, perhaps, is the massacre of the innocents, except for

24 C. Nieuwenhuis, *De expeditie naar Samalanga* (*Januari 1901*)*: dagverhaal van een fotograaf te velde* (Amsterdam: Holkema, 1901).

25 Erika Langmuir, *Imagining Childhood* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 18.

26 Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Massacre of the Innocents*, 1566-1567, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Cornelis Cornelisz. van Haarlem, *Massacre of the Innocents*, 1590, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Peter Paul Rubens, *Massacre of the Innocents*, 1611-1612, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

the fact that this would put the Dutch in the shoes of the Roman soldiers who attempted to kill Christ. This is, perhaps, one of the reasons why the Aceh killings and their depictions caused so much debate: they belonged to a genre that was not deemed fitting for the occasion.

This is not to say that children in distress were not also important subjects in nineteenth-century European visual culture. Indeed, Hugh Cunningham has characterised the period between 1830 and 1920 in the history of children and childhood in the West as one of "saving the children".[27] This age saw an enormous increase in the efforts of society not only to save children's souls and raise them as future workers for the nation, but also to make sure that children had proper childhoods that they could enjoy. It was not until the nineteenth century that the concept of "childhood" as a separate developmental phase first became widespread, as a period of innocence and play. Attention all over Europe (including the Netherlands) and in the United States was directed at child labour, cruelty towards children, and homeless children. Especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, images, particularly photographs, depicted the poverty in which children lived. In the United States, for instance, Jacob Riis' *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) performed this task, while in the Netherlands Tonnis Post and in the Indies H.F. Tillema had similar projects.[28] Another reason for the problematic status of the 1904 photographs, therefore, was that this type of image was usually accompanied by indictments against the state, not applause for its glorious mission.

Still, in nineteenth-century Dutch painting and drawing most images of children were of well-behaved boys and girls working hard or playing within the context of virtuous families. Cunningham writes that "[a] sweetened romanticism was the dominant force in the way children came to be pictured in the nineteenth century".[29] It was only seldom that this arcadia was disturbed. One widespread genre in the Netherlands and the Indies in which we often find more disturbing images of children was that of postmortem paintings and photographs.[30] These images – by the late

27 Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500*, 2nd ed. (London: Pearson, 2005).

28 For Post, see Jan Coppens, *De bewogen camera: protest en propaganda door middel van foto's* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1982). For Tillema, see Ewald Vanvugt, *Een propagandist van het zuiverste water: H.F. Tillema (1870-1952) en de fotografie van tempo doeloe* (Amsterdam: Mets, 1993).

29 Cunningham, *Children and Childhood*, 71.

30 For such photographs in the Indies, see Rob Nieuwenhuys, *Baren en oudgasten: Tempo doeloe – een verzonken wereld: Fotografische documenten uit het oude Indië 1870-1920* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1998), 176-177.

nineteenth century sometimes produced as *cartes de visite* – were both objects of mourning and ways to commemorate the dead. The children in these pictures are often lovingly laid down, their hands holding onto rosaries with flowers in their hair.

Also during their lifetime Dutch children were occasionally shown in troubled situations in the nineteenth century. Jan Hendrik van de Laar (1807-1874) painted *The Divorce* in 1846, after a poem by the popular Dutch *Biedermeier* poet Jan Hendrik Tollens. It depicts a boy rejoining his father's and mother's hands in court after the judge, in a reversal of the famous judgement of Salomon, has tried to force him to say whom he loved more and should be his guardian. Painters such as Ary Scheffer and Jan Adam Kruseman have portrayed orphans being comforted over the death of one parent by the other, or in blissful ignorance while the widow or widower longingly looks at her or his spouse's portrait. Other sources of distress, such as poverty, are sublimated in various ways. August Allebé's 1846 painting *The Well-Guarded Child*, of an infant whose cradle is situated in a shed where it is surrounded by all kinds of animals, including an ox, becomes even more an echo of Christ's birth in a manger through the device of the single ray of sunlight entering through the window in the ceiling that directly illuminates the little child. In Gerardus Terlaak's 1853 *A Rich Lady Visits a Poor Household* the tired and emaciated children sitting with their despairing mother at the sickbed of their father have not yet discovered the lady who has just entered the room, undoubtedly bringing solace and means to a better life. Such images are far removed from the explicit violence in which the children in the 1904 Aceh photographs found themselves.[31]

What about the relation in visual culture between soldiers and children? According to Henny Goedegebuure-Koelewijn, Dutch painters and drawers of soldiers in the early nineteenth century focused primarily on heroism on the battlefield (an example is Jelgerhuis' *Victory at Leuven*, mentioned above), while later painters like George Hendrik Breitner (1857-1923) and Isaac Israëls (1865-1934) concentrated on the soldiers' everyday lives. These images produced the army men as soldiers, but also as civilians, sons and fathers.[32] In Israëls' *Transport of Colonial Soldiers* (1882), a monumental piece that was presented at the Salon in Paris in 1885, soldiers of the KNIL

31 For an extensive analysis of paintings and other images of children in the Netherlands until the nineteenth century, see Jeroen Dekker, *Het verlangen naar opvoeden: Over de groei van de pedagogische ruimte in Nederland sinds de Gouden Eeuw tot omstreeks 1900* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2006).

32 Henny Goedegebuure-Koelewijn, "Het militaire genre in de negentiende eeuw – van heroïek naar alledaagse werkelijkheid," in *Geeft acht! Het militaire genre in de negentiende*

walk across the *Koningsbrug* (King's Bridge) in Rotterdam on their way to a ship that will take them to the Netherlands Indies. The painter himself had only turned seventeen the year he made the work. Several children accompany their fathers and brothers as they set out to conquer the islands, their return being far from certain. In the centre of the painting, an elderly woman clutches the arm of her son to say some last words before he vanishes from sight. Her other hand envelopes that of the grandchild left in her care. *Transport of Colonial Soldiers* has been interpreted by art historians as a departure from the idyllic landscapes and coastscapes of the Hague School to which Israëls belonged, but for us the more important aspect of it is even more pronounced in another of Israëls' paintings of the time: *A Soldier with Two Children*, from 1881 (Figure 4). The man at the centre of this painting is both a soldier (by that time, imagined as a protector of the nation) and a family man. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the relationship between the military and the public was a topic of debate in the Netherlands and Israëls' paintings of soldiers as sons and fathers can be seen as rather ambiguous contributions to this discussion in which, on the one hand, children are protected by their fighting fathers, while on the other hand they are at risk of becoming orphans.

As the historian Ronald van der Wal writes, the army played a major role in policing public order up to the early 1900s – the police had more limited tasks at the time – and was called in to assist during strikes, riots and such public events as fairs and fireworks.[33] Several observers from inside and outside the military, however, were less convinced that the nature of the army was suited for such intense and frequent contact with the public and argued for a stronger police force that could take over some of the tasks the army was performing. Military assistance would only be necessary in extreme situations. It was only in 1911, however, that the role of the military was seriously criticised and condemned after its actions during an international strike of sailors and dockworkers in Amsterdam, and a fundamental debate was held which led to the demilitarisation of the public sphere. It is these debates about the relationship between the military and the public that we can connect to Israëls' painting, but also to the often shocked responses to the expedition in the Gajo and Alas lands.

eeuw, ed. Henny Goedegebuure-Koelewijn, Jos Hilkhuijsen and Caroline de Westenholz (Zwolle: Waanders; The Hague: Gemeentemuseum, 2006), 7-14.

33 Ronald van der Wal, *Of geweld zal worden gebruikt! Militaire bijstand bij de handhaving en het herstel van de openbare orde 1840-1920* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2003).

Figure 4 Isaac Israëls, *A Soldier with Two Children*, 1881

Source: Collection National Military Museum, Soesterberg: No. 119242

What if we saw the 1904 photograph as a blend of genres? As a combination of the traditional victory scene, a photograph exposing child suffering, and the more recent genre of the protective soldier, together forming a contradictory combination? If we compare the Aceh photograph with Israëls' painting, the former becomes something of a morbid parody of the latter with the soldier on the ground "looking after" the child. If the image were not so tragic we could see it as a farce. This was not at all how children's lives were imagined to start out. The blend of genres becomes even more poignant if we look at the commentary of Lieutenant J.C.J. Kempees, made in the aftermath of the slaughter of the village of Tjané Oekön-Toenggöl on 21 April: "It was possible to spare one woman and her offspring who was hiding in a pit, guarding her four children, and who had kept her motherly instinct. It was a pleasure for us to see that here there was a woman who was truly a mother".[34] By implicitly apportioning blame to the dead parents of the orphaned children for not looking after them tenaciously enough, Kempees almost places the *marechaussees* here in the role of performing a rescue operation for deserving survivors.

Throughout the book on the expedition Kempees published in 1905, a number of remarks are made about women who in his eyes were the opposite of good mothers, for instance those who together with their children fought against the Dutch, or who killed their children and themselves after a Dutch victory. As Langmuir has shown, the trope of the bad mother was widespread in European visual culture, and was used by draftsmen such as William Hogarth and Francisco Goya. The most famous murderous mother, Medea, had been a theme in European visual culture for centuries. It is possible that, from Kempees' perspective, the photographs of the posing soldiers with the surviving infants denoted the proper care for native children that their dead relatives, leaving aside a few exceptions, could not provide. The bitter irony was that the Dutch completely abrogated responsibility for creating these orphans.

Part of the ambiguity of these photograph thus stems from the fact that they do not fit existing European visual genres. Particularly if we focus on the relation between the children and the soldiers, the latter become unstable figures who combine the characteristics of caretakers and slaughterers. In this sense, the photograph never comes into sharp focus, but keeps on changing shape, like Wittgenstein's duck-rabbit. For some observers the soldiers were either one or the other, leading to dissent concerning the nature of these events and their depictions, while in other cases confusion

34 Kempees, *De tocht van overste van Daalen* 84.

and contradiction was apparent within individual responses. Part of the problem was that the native child and its relation to the state was far from clear.

Children and the colonial state

While the often-used metaphor of the relation between the Dutch and the natives as one between parents and children, as well as the position of white and mixed-race (*Indische* or Eurasian) children, has been analysed by several authors, as yet we know little about the representation of native children in Dutch colonial culture.[35] As in the case of visual culture, a comparison with the situation in Europe puts the colonial order of things into perspective.

During the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Europeans increasingly embraced the idea of preserving for children a "proper childhood", implying in the words of Cunningham "a childhood separated from the adult world in innocence and dependence".[36] According to Jeroen Dekker, the Netherlands in the nineteenth century saw a considerable expansion of "pedagogical space", that is the whole set of preconditions necessary to be able to raise children.[37] Whereas around 1800 this space had been expanded with the argument that the nation needed virtuous citizens, around 1900 the prevailing reason given was that it was done in the interests of the child's

35 On the parent-child metaphor in Dutch colonial relations, see Frances Gouda, *Dutch Culture Overseas: Colonial Practice in the Netherlands Indies 1900-1942* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995), and Frances Gouda, "Good mothers, Medeas, or Jezebels: Feminine imagery in colonial and anticolonial rhetoric in the Dutch East Indies, 1900-1942," in *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism*, ed. Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 236-254. In the same volume, on the production and position of white and mixed-race children, see Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, "So close and yet so far: The ambivalence of Dutch colonial rhetoric on Javanese servants in Indonesia, 1900-1942," 131-153. See also Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 112-139; Joost Coté, "'The sins of their fathers': Culturally at risk children and the colonial state in Asia," *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education* 45:1-2 (2009): 129-142. I have found one scholarly text that specifically addresses native children, "aristocratic" Javanese girls: Gouda, *Dutch Culture Overseas*, 75-117. On children in French and British colonial society, see Owen White, *Children of the French Empire: Miscegenation and Colonial Society in French West Africa 1895-1960* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999) and Satadru Sen, *Colonial Childhoods: The Juvenile Periphery of India, 1850-1945* (London: Anthem, 2005).

36 Cunningham, *Children and Childhood*, 203.

37 Dekker, *Het verlangen naar opvoeden,* 11.

development. Dekker writes that the Dutch pedagogical space in the nineteenth century had a divided character. Around 1900 in the Netherlands, a "proper" childhood was thought to be advanced through two measures: on the one hand, following Romantic thought, the creation of a "pedagogical arcadia" and on the other hand, following Enlightenment thought, the regulation and rationalisation of education. In 1905 the so-called Children's Laws were introduced in the Netherlands which made it possible to deprive people of parental rights if they did not meet certain standards. Earlier on, labour and compulsory education laws had been specifically aimed at children. This meant that the state and its institutions gained substantially more power over children than in the past.

How did these developments play out in the Indies? If we look at some of the writings of Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936), a prominent thinker and writer and, between 1898 and 1906, Adviser on Native Affairs to the Netherlands Indies government, we find several suggestions for the state to intervene directly in the lives of children. In his *The Netherlands and Islam* (1911), while addressing the topic of native education, he writes, for instance:

> The main reason why … it is strongly desirable that young Natives … stay in such a European family, is that the Native family is not yet fit to offer the necessary moral support to youth that has been educated in a European manner. This has to change, but for that first of all the level of upbringing of women needs to be improved. The Native woman needs to be better educated, but first of all she needs to be formed better and developed in a moral sense.[38]

Snouck Hurgronje saw education and "upbringing in a European sense" (*opvoeding in Europeeschen zin*) as important tools "not to combat Islam, not to convert its followers to another religion, but to support them in their self-liberation form those parts of [Islam's] system … that hinder participation in the contemporary civilised life of peoples".[39] That native families, and particularly mothers, sometimes posed a threat to these goals becomes clear if we look at another set of texts by Snouck Hurgronje, which were directly related to the Aceh War, as they were ethnographic studies which were used by the colonial government as sources of information needed for the subjugation of Sumatra.

38 Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, *Nederland en de Islâm*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1915), 93.
39 Ibid., 89.

Snouck Hurgronje wrote a 950-page study on the Acehnese (published in two volumes in 1893-95), and another 400-page study on the Gajos (published in 1903), who lived directly above the Alas valley.[40] Among the wide variety of subjects broached in the former, including jurisdiction, fishery, science, literature and religion, there is also family life, with two chapters that are of particular importance: "Pregnancy and Birth: The First Years of the Child" and "The Parents as Educators". For most of the latter chapter, the narrator is not strongly present and describes the many aspects of Acehnese child rearing in a documentary style, as if he is not himself part of the observations that are made. At the very end of this section, however, when the subject turns to divorce, he comes to the fore and even focuses on the situation from the perspective of European mothers:

> It often happens that the mother claims certain rights which would seem very strange to European mothers. If her own unweaned child were left to her charge one might suppose that no true mother would shirk the task of nursing it. Yet the Muslim law does not *oblige* the mother to suckle the child, and if she chooses to do so, gives her a right to a recompense for her services as wet-nurse. In Aceh, after the child of a divorced woman has been weaned, the mother often refuses to hand it over to the family of its father until her wages as wet-nurse have been paid. This she looks upon as a sort of revenge for her compulsory separation from her child.[41]

It is not a coincidence that Snouck Hurgronje changes tone and perspective on the specific topic of breast-feeding. As Jeroen Dekker has shown, giving infants the breast had been an important sign of good motherhood in the Netherlands since at least the seventeenth century. This practice had, moreover, been given a renewed impulse in the nineteenth century as powerful voices within Dutch society that claimed all mothers, no matter what their social class, should feed their children themselves.[42] That ideas about "bad" native motherhood circulated within Dutch colonial circles could already be seen from the discussion of Kempees' book above. In his

40 Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, *De Atjehers*, 2 vols. (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij; Leiden: Brill, 1893-95) (Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, *The Ahehnese*, 2 vols., trans. A.W.S. O'Sullivan (Leiden: Brill, 1906)). Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, *Het Gajoeland en zijne bewoners* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1903).

41 Snouck Hurgronje, *De Atjehers*, Vol. 1, 450.

42 Dekker, *Het verlangen naar opvoeden*, 210-212.

book, Kempees mentions Snouck Hurgronje, whose work he had read and from which he quotes.[43]

Within the context of these writings and debates in Europe and the Indies, it is clear why the 1904 expedition and its photographs became points of cultural encounter around which confusion and debate arose. While on the one hand the state aimed at preventing children from having no childhood, and devised several means to intervene when parents failed, here its measures had clearly overshot the mark. Cunningham writes that "[i]n the thinking of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the rights of children were entirely consonant with an increased role for the state in the lives of children".[44] The Aceh photographs exposed that, in fact, there was a tension between these two aims.

The colonial situation was, however, complicated by one additional factor: race. This added an extra dose of confusion to the question of what the relation between children and the colonial state ought to be. What emerges from colonial writings is a set of contradictory statements that do not add up to one, coherent conception of what the native child represented. "The native child", in Dutch colonial discourse, is a slippery phenomenon which made it on the one hand hard to pinpoint, yet on the other hand also a highly adaptable category that could be remoulded according to what the occasion required. Several examples of this slipperiness can be found in the works of Snouck Hurgronje.

As well as in the chapters already mentioned in *De Atjehers*, native children are extensively discussed in a chapter called "Games and Amusement". Near the end of the first paragraph entitled "All Kinds of Games for Young and Old", Snouck Hurgronje makes a number of more general observations in a passage that follows his description of children's games with marbles in both Aceh and Java, and on what are called "tiger games," a variety of board games. They are worth quoting at length:

> From examples such as … these tiger-games which have long since acquired a genuine popularity far out among the islands of the Indian Archipelago in spite of their foreign origin, we may see how wide is the spread of such pastimes throughout the world even where civilisation is still most primitive and the means of communion and intercourse with other nations few and far between.

43 Kempees, *De tocht van overste van Daalen*, 28.

44 Cunningham, *Children and Childhood*, 163.

> In like manner we find the Dutch word *knikker* (marble) widely diffused in the interior of Java miles beyond any place where European children have ever played.
> ...
> Undoubtedly the more recent ethnography has at its disposal innumerable data which point to the most remarkable results scarcely conceivable in former times, arising from the uniformity of the human organism – results which appear even in the details of man's mental life.
> Manners and customs that the superficial inquirer might classify among the most peculiar characteristics of individual races, appear on closer observation to be in reality characteristics of a definite stage of civilisation in every region of the globe. The same is true of legends, theories regarding nature and the universe, proverbs etc.
> But - the tiger-games and the marbles warn us of it – as a marble sometimes turns out to have rolled through the world along unexpected roads we should not too hastily exclude every form of indirect contact or interchange, even between peoples entirely strange to one another.
> The examination of apparently insignificant pastimes has a value long since recognised in comparative ethnography and gives us at the same time an insight into the method of training the young practiced by different peoples.
> More than this, in the games of children there survive dead or dying customs and superstitions of their ancestors, so that they form a little museum of the ethnography of the past.[45]

Snouck Hurgronje starts from the question of why people all over the world play similar games, and in answering this question suggests several possible readings of Acehnese children's play. Several ambiguities can be found in these words which show the difficulties Dutch observers had in defining what an Acehnese child actually was and what their own relationship was to it.

A first set of unsolved questions can be grasped from his idea that children's games form an "ethnological museum" from which we can read a people's past. A parallel is drawn here between the development from children to adults and the development of people all over the globe from primitive to cultured. This was a well-known conception in the nineteenth century, when native cultures were often conceived as "traditional" and European cultures as "modern". One ambiguity lies in Snouck Hurgonje's

45 Snouck Hurgronje, *De Atjehers*, Vol. 1, 210-211.

remark that these games form a memory of either dead or dying customs and superstitions. Now if these customs are indeed "dead", the children and their games can clearly be distinguished from the parents and their actions, yet if the Acehnese superstitions apparent in these games are merely "dying", the question arises whether it is possible to make a separation between adult Acehnese and their offspring in the first place. On the one hand, these children are imagined as the progeny of Acehnese adults, yet on the other hand they are merely the children of people who are only children themselves. The questions which arise from this ambiguity concern what relation the Dutch had to these children: were they parents to them (just like they were for adult Acehnese, all of whom were thought to be at an earlier phase of human development); were they more like grandparents; or were they a kind of additional guardian (who stood on an equal footing with the children's biological parents)? The answer to these questions was important with respect to who should take care of native children: their biological parents or the Dutch colonial state, in short, who should be in charge of the pedagogical space that native children inhabited?

A second uncertainty in Snouck Hurgronje's text can be found in his answer to the question of how it was possible that people all over the globe played with marbles. How can we explain, he asks, that even "primitive" civilisations such as the Acehnese, who had limited contact with other cultures, have marbles? A sense of surprise is captured in this word "even", suggesting that the people from the archipelago should not have played these games *yet*, as they lived remotely in both a spatial and temporal sense of the word. Snouck Hurgronje then offers two contradictory explanations. At first he writes that "[m]anners and customs which the superficial inquirer might classify among the most peculiar characteristics of individual races, appear on closer observation to be in reality characteristics of a definite stage of civilisation in every region of the globe". This is the universalist approach: all people are essentially the same (just above this line, Snouck Hurgronje talked about "the uniformity of the human organism"), but they are differently positioned on a linear developmental timeline. Yet directly following this, Snouck Hurgronje writes: "one should not exclude too hastily every form of indirect contact and borrowing". Here, the possibility is offered that there is in fact no such thing as a universal timeline, but that historical change is much messier and characterised by all kinds of leaps, convergences and divergences. With respect to Dutch conceptions of the native child this raises the more general question whether it is a specimen of "the child" as it could be found in every culture, including Europe, during one point of its development, or if the native child is the product of specific,

historical circumstances. If the former was the case, models that were applicable to European children would also be of use to study the native child. In the latter case, however, frames of interpretation had to be established with the help of which these children could be "read".[46]

A third, related and equally unsolved problem concerns the question whether, if these games were indeed the product of specific historical change, the behaviour of Acehnese children was "indigenously" developed or imported from outside. Throughout *The Acehnese* a regularly repeated concern is whether a certain custom or belief is "native" or "foreign", the latter of which can be further separated into several, sometimes closely related but never fully overlapping, categories such as "Malay", "Indian", "Hindu", "Arabic" and "Muslim". Certain institutional practices such as the administration of justice, for instance, are "untouched" and "really indigenous and of very great antiquity",[47] while prostitution apparently is not.[48] An obsession with origins can also be found in Snouck Hurgronje's remark that a certain type of *pantons*, poems which usually have love as their subject, can be found in Aceh, "but are not to be regarded as genuinely Acehnese",[49] while a board game called *patjih* is said to be "imported by Klings and other natives of Hindustan".[50] The question raised here is whether the islands of the archipelago could be divided from other colonies and from each other according to clearly distinguishable cultures, or whether these cultures were much slipperier phenomena without clear boundaries and origins. These concerns touched all subjects, including children.

All in all, questions around the native child abounded: In what ways was it a child? In what ways was it native? In what ways was it different from other children and natives? And while a scholar like Snouck Hurgronje could reflect on these and other ambiguities through thinking and writing about them, a soldier like Kempees was confronted with them while standing on the battlefield. There, the most pressing question was not how these children came to play the way they did, but whether they were enemies or

46 My discussion of colonial and European historicism was informed by Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004). See also Paul Bijl, "Old, eternal, and future light in the Dutch East Indies: Colonial photography and the history of the globe," in *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 49-65.

47 Snouck Hurgronje, *De Atjehers*, Vol. 1, 3.

48 Ibid., Vol. 2, 351.

49 Ibid., Vol. 2, 79.

50 Ibid., Vol. 2, 205.

objects of care. As discussed above, Kempees berated the Acehnese mothers for not taking proper care of their children. This attitude is contrasted with those of the soldiers, who distributed water and rice, vaccinated children against smallpox, and tended to them in the army's mobile hospital. Yet at other moments, Kempees describes the children as the army's mortal enemies, for instance during the attack of the village of Pèparéq Göip on 18 March. Once past the parapet, Kempees writes, the *marechaussees* "saw with horror how the defenders had locked themselves inside *with* their women and children. In Aceh, as one knows, the *bentengs* [fortifications] are only occupied by men".[51] He continues:

> The enemy fought very fanatically, which was disclosed by the loud praying perceived continuously all through the attack as well as by the fact that all, including women and children, were dressed in ceremonial outfits to prove that the fighters had devoted themselves to death. / The men wore colourful *hadji* coats, and the white turban or *kupia*; the women in their new sarongs … and jackets … are, just like the children, covered with silver jewellery. Consistent with this fanaticism was the mode of defence, which did not end when the parapet was conquered, but only after every last hideout was taken away. Men, women and children, all armed with one or more pieces of cold steel, milled around, and made desperate individual attacks. Sometimes the men hid between women and children and darted out unexpectedly to strike. To save their own lives our troops were obliged to continue fighting until no resistance was offered anymore, and this ended with the last man.[52]

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have tried to show the ambiguous nature of the Alas photographs for their contemporary observers in the years soon after the announcement of the Ethical Policy. Experienced as aesthetically titillating and morally shocking; seen as showing timeless suffering and exposing a particular history of violence; feared for exposing the violence implicit in the Ethical Policy; drawing upon various, contradictory, genres; and depicting children whose identity was far from clear to the colonial state and the military, these photographs could be interpreted in many

51 Kempees, *De tocht van overste van Daalen*, 40.
52 Ibid., 41.

different ways. Kempees' words in the final quote add one last possibility to this list: that the cage-like constellation surrounding the child on the Kuta Rih photograph (Figure 1) was not so much there to protect it from the soldiers, but in fact the other way around.

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Part II

Local Lenses on Living in an "Ethical" Indies

5 Interracial unions and the Ethical Policy

The representation of the everyday in Indo-European family photo albums

Pamela Pattynama

In 2008 a collection of photographs known as the IWI collection (*Indisch Wetenschappelijk Instituut*, or Indies Scientific Institute) was donated to the state-sponsored, anthropological Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam. Interweaving private memory and public history, this addition to the large archive already accumulated in Dutch museums connects the colonial past and the postcolonial present and future. The more than 60,000 photographs brought together in about 550 albums were taken in the Netherlands Indies (now Indonesia) and belonged to families who lived during the period of the Ethical Policy. The majority of the collection consists of amateur snapshots and captures so-called Indo-European families, that is, families of mixed Indonesian and European descent, posing in and outside colonial homes or on outings.[1]

After Indonesia's declaration of independence in 1945, many photograph albums travelled as personal belongings in the luggage of their owners who "repatriated" to new homes in the Netherlands.[2] In the first chaotic years of arrival and settlement, such albums were kept as souvenirs and personal memories in private domestic spaces. Other albums were found by Dutch military forces in houses abandoned by Europeans and in Japanese army depots during the Indonesian war of independence (1945-49), which broke out immediately after the Japanese occupation of the Indies (1942-45). For unknown reasons, the Japanese had kept photographs and albums in

1 In British colonies people of mixed descent were usually called "Eurasian", whilst in the Netherlands Indies they were called "Indo-Europeans". The nominator "Eurasian" is useful in the situation of the British Empire, where people of "mixed race" were seen as "native" people. In contrast, colonial rule in the Netherlands Indies included mixed (Indo-European) children in the European group if their European father acknowledged them as his offspring.

2 For the history of the IWI collection, see Edy Seriese, "Finding history: The inheritance of the IWI Collection," Research Report (Amsterdam: PhotoCLEC, 2011). For the social biography of the IWI collection, see Pamela Pattynama, "*Tempo doeloe* nostalgia and *brani* memory community: The IWI Collection as a postcolonial archive," *Photography and Culture* 5 (2012): 268-277.

their storehouses, where they were later discovered, and shipped to the Netherlands as reclaimed Dutch possessions.[3] After a number of the albums were returned to their owners, the collection expanded rapidly thanks to many donations by elderly migrants and their children, who wanted these depictions of their family history safeguarded.

The collected photographs shifted from personal to social memory domains when, from the 1950s onwards, they were shared and used by Indies migrants as a public archive. Initiated by Indo journalist and spokesman Tjalie Robinson, this archival process involved a conscious effort to encourage pride in Indo(-European) heritage and identity.[4] Eventually, the photographs, termed the IWI collection, were widely disseminated in various publications and have now become a visual part of the Dutch cultural landscape and national memory. After being digitised the IWI photographic collection was donated to the Amsterdam Tropenmuseum between 2006 and 2008. Unfortunately, the names of many photographers and first owners of the IWI albums are no longer known to us.

The *Indisch Wetenschappelijk Instituut* is in fact an ironic name, given by the immigrants themselves to point out both the *unscientific* manner in which the archive was assembled and the ways in which their fractured history has been constructed.[5] As "social actors" – to use Elizabeth Edwards' term – the IWI photographs have participated in the emergence of both a national colonial nostalgia, and a *brani* (daring) memory community in which the Indies migrants have engaged to make sense of their postcolonial lives in the Netherlands.[6] Many people tend to see photos as representing their private and personal memories, but in fact the personal and public domains are always intertwined. While Elizabeth Edwards perceives photographs as sites of intersecting histories, media expert José van Dijck asserts that "mediated memories", such as family photographs, are never merely private. They form encounters "where the personal and the collective meet, interact, and clash" and from which we may derive "important cultural knowledge about

3 Janneke van Dijk and Susan Legêne, ed., *The Netherlands East Indies at the Tropenmuseum: A Colonial History* (Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2011), 144-145.

4 Wim Willems, *Tjalie Robinson. Biografie van een Indo-schrijver* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker 2008). Also see Seriese, "Finding history", 20-48. Pattynama, "*Tempo doeloe* nostalgia," 272-274.

5 Seriese, "Finding history," 36.

6 Elizabeth Edwards discusses photographs as material social actors in Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories. Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford: Berg, 2001) and Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, ed., *Photographs Objects Histories* (London: Routledge, 2004). For the participation of the IWI photographs in the emergence of a national colonial nostalgia see Pamela Pattynama, *Bitterzoet Indië. Herinnering en nostalgie in literatuur, foto's en films* (Amsterdam: Prometheus. Bert Bakker, 2014) 184-215.

the construction of historical and contemporaneous selves in the course of time".[7] As mediated memories, the IWI photos may therefore reveal to us the role of family photos in "individual, social and cultural memory".[8]

In this chapter I will suggest possible functions which the albums might have had during the uncertain times in which they were compiled by a range of Indo-European families living on the boundaries between old traditions and modernity. Racial intermingling lies at the core of this history and this will therefore first be examined briefly.

Indo-Europeans

The relationship between the Netherlands and the Indonesian archipelago began in the late sixteenth century, when Dutch merchants sailed to the East in a quest for wealth gleaned from the spice trade. After a number of rivalries among themselves were eliminated, the Dutch joined forces and founded the first multinational company, the VOC (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, United East India Company). To secure its interests and establish a sound and lasting community of settlers the VOC saw advantages in unions between European men and Asian women. Through (re-)marrying local women the senior class of European male immigrants forged important local alliances to try and ensure their control of positions of power and wealth in the VOC domain.[9]

As unions with Asian women were thought to have a stabilising influence on political order and the health of the settlement, the VOC even purchased slave women on Asian markets as housekeepers and concubines called *njais* for the lower ranks of their employees. Allegedly, Asian women had fewer demands than European women, and mixed children were supposed to be stronger and healthier than "full-blood" white children living in the tropics. In terms of colonial and financial interests, the encouragement of concubinage had even more advantages: local knowledge provided by Asian women helped the European newcomers to feel at home in the unknown country so

7 José van Dijck, *Mediated Memories in the Digital Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 2.

8 Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, "Incongruous images: 'Before, during, and after' the Holocaust," *History and Theory* 48 (2010), 13.

9 The historian Jean Gelman Taylor emphasises the agency of Asian-born women and the long overlooked role of Asians shaping colonial culture: Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia: European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia* (Madison, Wisc.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983).

that they would settle more easily. Thereby the expensive "importation" of European women could be restricted and salaries could be kept low since the male employees got "free" domestic and sexual services from local women. Interracial relationships would thus keep the men at work while, as a fortuitous side effect, homosexuality in the all-male VOC enclaves could be avoided. Through this relatively cheap regulation of sexuality and domesticity, concubinage for the lower ranks was made more accessible than marriage.[10] From the sixteenth century onwards colonial settlements in the Indies were therefore based on interracial concubinage.

Hence, mainly for economic reasons, and in sharp contrast to French colonialism, for example, the establishment of Dutch colonial control in the early-modern period was grounded in the encouragement of interracial concubinage and marriages. In the colonial "contact zone" of the Indies, the prevalent domestic arrangement therefore became the mixed-race (mestizo, later "Indo-European") family.[11] If the white father acknowledged the mixed offspring as his own, they legally belonged to the European, Christian community. Facilitated through religious rather than racial restrictions, the tradition of interracial concubinage in the Indies thus implied much more than a mere cohabitation outside of marriage between European men and *njais*. As a social and political instrument cutting right across indigenous, mixed and European cultures, concubinage supported colonial rule and economic profits.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when Indo-European family ties often involved many more members than just a father, mother and their children, family connections and wealth, rather than race, determined social positioning.[12] After the *Reegerings Reglement* of 1854 (the Indies

10 *Concubinaat* (concubinage) was a contemporary term, in the Indies used to refer to the cohabitation outside of marriage between European men and Asian women. Apart from sexual access to a non-European woman, demands on her labour and legal rights to the children she bore, concubinage involved a range of political and economic advantages: Ann Laura Stoler, "Carnal knowledge and imperial power: Gender, race, and morality in colonial Asia," in *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*, ed. Micaela di Leonardo (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), 57-58. Also see Frances Gouda, "Gender, race, and sexuality: Citizenship and colonial culture in the Dutch East Indies," in *Dutch Culture Overseas: Colonial Practice in the Netherlands Indies 1900-1942* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995), 157-193.

11 Coined by Marie-Louise Pratt, the term "contact zones" foregrounds the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters that are so easily ignored or suppressed by binary accounts of conquest and domination: Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 6.

12 See for this argument Ulbe Bosma and Remco Raben, *De oude Indische wereld 1500-1920: De geschiedenis van Indische Nederlanders* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2003), 10-11.

"Constitution"), the inhabitants in the colony were juridically divided into three groups: the indigenous or native people, a small group of Europeans to whom Indo-Europeans also belonged, and a group of "Foreign Orientals" which consisted mainly of people with a Chinese or Arab background. The establishment of the *Reglement* meant that the category of race started to determine everybody's status. Towards the end of the nineteenth century social hierarchies based on ethnicity became even more evident while simultaneously a fear of "miscegenation" was imported from Europe. Subsequently, Indies colonial society gradually grew away from its mixed origins in the early East Indies Company settlements.

In the European vocabulary, "miscegenation" became associated with a set of discourses about degeneracy and eugenics. In the Indies, eugenic discourses became closely linked to the vulnerability of white prestige as implied in what historian Elsbeth Locher-Scholten calls "ethical imperialism".[13] In the context of an expanding European colonial power the object of this fear was not so much interracial sexual relations as their inevitable result, the decline and "downfall" of the white population. Interracial sex and concubinage – fundamental elements of the existing mestizo culture – were now taken to be the source of psychological breakdown and ill health among European men. Racial degeneracy was thus linked to the sexual transmission of cultural contagions and to the political instability of imperial rule.[14] In European colonies more generally, apprehensions about the decline of the white population gave way in this period to a radical turn in views on interracial sex and concubinage.[15] While racial mixing became a colonial taboo, Asian-born women became regarded as the source of degeneration. Indo-European children born of mixed unions who had once been regarded as strong and healthy were now seen as the fruits of the regrettable weakness of white men, psychically marked and morally marred with the inferior qualities of their native mothers. Just as the encouragement of interracial unions had been pivotal in earlier centuries, their condemnation became crucial to twentieth-century modern development.

Whereas initially beneficial provisions were replaced by the more pressing demands of the white community's so-called respectability, solidarity and mental health, the control of the bodies and sexual behaviour of

13 Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten: Vijf studies over koloniaal denken en doen van Nederlanders in de Indonesische Archipel 1877-1942* (Utrecht: HES Publishers, 1981).

14 Stoler, "Carnal knowledge," 73.

15 Sander L. Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 199, 202, 256.

indigenous, white and mixed-race women became essential in maintaining the boundaries of the white group.[16] The earlier blurring of the boundaries between the "races" was banned in favour of a process of what historian J.J.A. van Doorn calls "racial unmixing".[17] When racial demarcations became stricter than ever before, those who were considered white Europeans (*Belanda totok*) or natives (*Inlanders*) became distinctive groups. Indo-European people, however, "coloured by history and shaped by place", were a problem, as an Indo-European person belonged to one or the other group depending on whether her/his white father acknowledged their legitimacy.[18] Ironically, most of the people who belonged to the so-called white European community were themselves of "mixed-race" origin, as were their "half-breed" children.[19] Often visible racial difference was located in one's own family, instead of clearly being located in an "Other". It was this otherness *within* the so-called white European group that blurred social hierarchies and came to threaten colonial society from the inside.[20]

This history has been the subject of ongoing discussions and debates in the Netherlands. In Dutch historiography, written and visual fiction, TV documentaries, and in many forms of both art and popular culture the Indies has been evoked and remembered as a beloved but most contentious *lieu de mémoire*.[21] Rather than belonging to the national history of modern-day Indonesia, the Indies therefore seem to belong more to an "unfinished" part of the history of the Netherlands. This history goes back many centuries and determines the framing of the photographs in the family albums assembled in the IWI collection.

16 Stoler, "Carnal knowledge," 72-78. Gouda, "Gender, race and sexuality," 182-191.

17 J.J.A. van Doorn, *De laatste eeuw van Indië. Ontwikkeling en ondergang van een koloniaal project* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1994), 68.

18 Zimitri Erasmus, ed., *Coloured by History, Shaped by Place: Perspectives on Coloured Identities in the Cape* (Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2001). Many thanks to Ena Jansen for mentioning this study to me.

19 A. van Marle, "De groep der Europeanen in Nederlands-Indië, iets over ontstaan en groei," *Indonesia* (1951-1952): 314-20, 481-492, 485; Stoler, "Carnal knowledge," 53.

20 This "otherness within" is precisely what can be traced in Louis Couperus' great novel *De stille kracht*, published in 1900 and translated as *The Hidden Force*. *De stille kracht* contains an eminent portrayal of the troubling new associations between sexuality, pure whiteness and class and alludes to the transition from a mestizo world to one that was being moulded and shaped primarily by *totok* sensibilities: Pamela Pattynama, "Secrets and danger: Interracial sexuality in Louis Couperus' *The Hidden Force* and Dutch colonial culture around 1900," in *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism*, ed. Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 84-107.

21 Pamela Pattynama, *... de baai ... de binnenbaai ... Indië herinnerd* (Amsterdam: Vossiuspers, 2007).

Indies portraiture

After its invention in 1839, photography was immediately recognised as a new technology that addressed the needs of the time. In the Netherlands Indies the Dutch employed the new medium to gain knowledge about their colony. To support and legitimate colonialism and trade, the "true" and "objective" photographic presentation of reality was used for anthropological, ethnological, medical, cultural and other scientific purposes. At the same time, portrait photography became popular among the well-to-do. The earliest photographs in the IWI family albums were made by professional photographers who followed Western traditions of portraiture and thus introduced the formal aesthetics of the genre to the colony. The roots of these modern family portraits can be traced back to Renaissance portraits, which represented the family as a social institution whose ties were based on "property", "moral values" and a "bond of feeling".[22]

In its early days, photography was an expensive and complicated process which required a great deal of equipment, training and skills. Only wealthy families could afford to make use of studio photographers or hire them to have their photographs taken at home.[23] From 1857 onwards, Western entrepreneurs such as the well-known firm of Woodbury and Page owned the earliest and most illustrious photographic studios in the Indies, serving the elite of (Indo-)European, Chinese and indigenous society. European clients tended to send portraits of themselves "home". Their photographs thus facilitated a visual way of contact across the ocean between the Netherlands and the Indies. When the Indies "market" grew in the early twentieth century, as Karen Strassler discusses in Chapter Seven, many immigrant photographers from Chinese Canton, known as *toekang potret* (skilled portrait photographers), began to set up modest, family-run photo studios where an even wider range of people could have their pictures taken.[24]

Photographic practices shifted drastically when, around the turn of the century, increasing numbers of Europeans, among them many women,

22 Julia Hirsch, *Family Photographs: Content, Meaning and Effect* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 15.

23 Liesbeth Ouwehand, *Herinneringen in beeld: Fotoalbums uit Nederlands-Indië* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009).

24 See Paul Faber et al., ed., *Toekang potret: 100 Years of Photography in the Dutch Indies 1839-1939* (Amsterdam and Rotterdam: Fragment Uitgeverij/Museum voor Volkenkunde, 1989); Karen Strassler, "Cosmopolitan visions: Ethnic Chinese and the photographic envisioning of Indonesia in the 1950s," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 67 (2008): 395-432.

came to the Netherlands Indies, and the tourist market began to flourish. With the catchy phrase "You push the button and we do the rest", Kodak founder George Eastman had revolutionised photography by providing the public with a camera that was easy and fun to use. By the 1930s many (Indo-) European and Indonesian individuals and families from the lower as well as the upper middle classes had their own cameras and began assembling their own photograph albums. The historian Susie Protschky has argued that the abundance of what she calls *theeuurtje* photographs (photographs taken at tea time, around 4 pm, when family members and friends gathered) made by families in the Indies signal a "social ritual of consequence": "The table, objects and commodities at the centre of family photographs formed the social and visual axes around which countless Indies families chose to have themselves and their domestic lives photographed and thus remembered".[25] Such photographs show, in fact, how "tea tables in the Indies thus formed an important visual and social axis around which ties within and between colonial families – indeed, across large sections of elite colonial society" were forged and maintained.[26]

Family photographs representing the lives of "ordinary" colonial people were long seen as irrelevant to colonial history. Due to the emergence of oral, "history from below" and subaltern studies the voices of colonised and colonial people telling their "small narratives" have become historically significant. After what William Mitchell calls "the pictorial turn", family photographs became a growing research area and have been studied as important sources for historians, anthropologists and cultural analysts alike.[27] Subsidised by the Dutch government, the digitisation and donation of the IWI collection to the Tropenmuseum are the result of these changed theoretical perspectives. Since that time, vernacular photographs depicting histories of the everyday in the colony have been part of the larger narratives the Tropenmuseum tells.

The majority of the Indies photographic collections in Dutch museums are linked to colonial expansion and technocratic modernisation, whereas most family albums were compiled by European families. Between 1915 and 1940 the photographs collected in the Tropenmuseum were, in fact, used

25 Susie Protschky, "Tea cups, cameras and family life: Picturing domesticity in elite European and Javanese family photographs from the Netherlands Indies, ca. 1900-1942," *History of Photography* 36 (2012): 44.

26 Ibid., 53.

27 William Mitchell, "The pictorial turn," in *Picture Theory. Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 11-34.

to visualise the results of the Ethical Policy.[28] In contrast, and although there are IWI family photographs depicting white European families, the larger part of the photographs in the IWI family albums consists of often imperfect, sometimes blurry snapshots of *Indo*-European family members, friends, possessions and outings. These pictures of domestic family life are, however, juxtaposed with more "public" images, photographs depicting modern industrial developments such as factories, bridges and roads, as well as school classes and the distribution of medical care. The Indo families who compiled the albums have thus included the modernising, ethical colonial project in representations of themselves.

A third category of photographs collected in the albums are postcards of aestheticised Indies landscapes. Taken by professional photographers, such images are photographic versions of what is known as *Mooi Indië* (beautiful Indies) paintings, an art tradition introduced by Western painters during the first half of the twentieth century. *Mooi Indië* artists represented the colony in a romanticised way. Natural features of the Indonesian archipelago such as mountains, volcanoes, and rice paddies, as well as villages and local inhabitants, specifically artisans and aristocrats (both men and women), were favourite themes. As timeless as they may seem, *Mooi Indië* photographs were taken and collected during the uncertain time of upheaval when the *tempo doeloe* (good old days) mestizo culture was shifting to a Eurocentric culture. Taken and collected by families, the hotchpotch of private and public images brought together in many IWI albums captures the ways (Indo-)European families living in the Netherlands Indies depicted their lives both at home and in the public domain and by doing so reveal the ways Indos wished to represent and position themselves in time and space.

Marianne Hirsch has observed that in the twentieth century "the camera has become the family's primary instrument of self-knowledge and self-representation".[29] Family photographs are often the only autobiographical material that "ordinary" people such as Indo-Europeans possessed and have left for future generations. Frequently, family albums follow oral narrative conventions and tell their own versions of family history.[30] They also allow

28 Steven Vink and Janneke van Dijk, "From colonial topicality to cultural heritage: The history of the photograph collection," in *Photographs of the Netherlands East Indies at the Tropenmuseum* (Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2012), 48.

29 Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 6.

30 On the oral structuring of family photography, see Martha Langford, "Speaking the album: An application of the oral-photographic framework," in *Locating Memory: Photographic Acts*, ed.

us to see colonial family life in particularly visual ways that are not available through other media. A study of the collection of photographs in the IWI albums can therefore reveal how notions of civilisation and modernity were shaped and expressed in and outside the Indo-European home. What stories do the collection tell us about the everyday, especially about how interracial unions worked in the late-colonial Indies?

Ethical imperialism

The late-colonial period in the Indies was characterised by rapid nation-building, violent imperial expansion and a regime of enforced law and order.[31] The period is often described in terms of the Ethical Policy – the implementation of modernity and civilisation, including the "*opheffing*" (uplifting) of the Indonesian population, which had its correlates in the French *mission civilisatrice* and the British "white man's burden" (after a famous Rudyard Kipling poem from 1899).[32] With regard to the Dutch colonial situation, Elsbeth Locher-Scholten describes the uneasy but inextricable connection between Dutch imperial expansion and the civilising Ethical Policy in *Ethiek in fragmenten*. "Ethical imperialism" was used as an instrument of and legitimising force for military intervention, whereby expansion was considered necessary for the modernising project and the "uplift" of the Indonesians.[33] More recently, Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben have pointed to the countless tensions and contradictions which characterise the late-colonial period and suggest that further research along the lines of three key concepts – modernity, civilisation and citizenship – can explain the many inconsistencies in Dutch ethical imperialism.[34]

The history and social positioning of ordinary Indo-European families and individuals may help to illuminate these complexities. Within colonial

Annette Kuhn and Kirsten Emiko McAllister (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006). On family snapshots, see Patricia Holland and Jo Spence, ed., *Family Snaps: The Meaning of Domestic Photography* (London: Virago Press, 1991), 1-9.

31 Robert Cribb, ed., *The Late Colonial State in Indonesia: Political and Economic Foundations of the Netherlands Indies 1880-1942* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1994).

32 For a study of the relation between civilising projects and imperial expansions overseas, see Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1885-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

33 Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten.*

34 Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben, "Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië, 1890-1950," in *Het koloniale beschavingsoffensief: Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië, 1890-1950*, ed. Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009), 7-9.

society, mixed-race families occupied a particularly ambivalent and unstable position. Distinct from the "native" Indonesian population, Indo-Europeans were being increasingly subordinated in late-colonial society in favour of *Belanda totok* (white Dutch) colonial families, which could be divided, on the one hand, between "Indies-European" or *blijvers* (settlers) who had lived in the colony for generations and who were usually in some way related to the indigenous or Indo-European population, and on the other hand, the so-called "new Europeans", first-generation migrants who flocked into the colony in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Colonial rule in the Indies encompassed much more than an homogeneous ideology invented merely to disguise or legitimate Western domination. As Edward Said explained in *Orientalism*, representation and ideology were indispensable instruments in the invention and maintenance of colonialism, when Enlightenment claims about selfhood and individuality were underwritten by the simultaneous "othering" of colonised people.[35] Also, European colonialism tended to be partially shaped by indigenous traditions, while at the same time attempting to recast indigenous customs and practices in its own image.[36] This recasting of local customs and practices in the Dutch version of "orientalism" can clearly be traced in negotiations over the racial, social and civil positions that people of "mixed race" were to hold in the Netherlands Indies.

Middle-class aspirations were propagated by way of what Ann Stoler calls an "education of desire".[37] In his essay in this book (Chapter Eight), Henk Schulte Nordholt argues that modernity was not only something to which Europeans and Indo-Europeans in the colony aspired but that it was also sought by certain sectors of the local population. Advertisements and teaching materials were directed at upwardly mobile indigenous audiences presenting them with examples of a modern lifestyle which was supposedly attainable through buying specific consumer goods. The advertisements presented an idealised image of middle-class living in which "peace and order" had been internalised. The *kleine familie-eenheid* (nuclear family unit) modelled on Dutch middle-class ideals was emphasised and this type of family was presented as the pillar on which colonial peace, cleanliness and order could be based.

35 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1978).

36 Frances Gouda and Julia Ann Clancy-Smith, eds, *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 4-5.

37 Ann Laura Stoler, "The education of desire and the repressive hypothesis," in *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's* "History of Sexuality" *and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), 165-195.

Although Indo-Europeans belonged to a different social class than the indigenous middle class, they also strove towards a modern Western lifestyle and knew that the colonial system had been to their advantage up until then. More and more, however, they were forced to compete for jobs and positions with indigenous people. Due to the emerging Ethical Policy, education had slowly but surely been spreading among Indonesians. Compared to this upcoming middle class the Indo-European group often felt left behind, destined to become second-rate citizens. The gradual shift from the mestizo culture, in which it was possible for mixed-race people to obtain high positions, to a Eurocentric culture which was enforcing strict divisions while also offering educated indigenous locals improved opportunities, led to Indo-European people feeling marginalised and discriminated against. How did they negotiate the prevailing views on sexuality, race and civilisation in their everyday lives and aspirations? What changes did their previously privileged colonial culture undergo in the shift to a new form of colonial citizenship and lifestyle which would incorporate late-colonial modernity?

The IWI family photograph albums reveal some of the tensions and contradictions in late-colonial Indonesia and expose how Indo-European households responded to and enacted their changing lifestyles and identities. Although we tend to look at photographs as mimetic sources of realism and truth, they are – just as paintings and other visual media – representations of a reality in which a desired self-image is consciously constructed. Marianne Hirsch's concept of the "familial gaze" thus helps to articulate how Indo-Europeans dealt with the "conventions and ideologies of family" and have staged their lives and aspirations.[38] Relevant questions in this regard are: How did Indo-Europeans shape images, narratives and memories of themselves? How did they use photography, as the "family's primary instrument of self-knowledge", to present self-representations? How did they, in other words, photograph themselves to make sense of their lives in relation to the lives of others?

To address these questions I will now turn to some representative Indo-European family portraits.

The *njai*

Figure 1, probably taken between 1907 and 1910 in Java, comes from one of the many albums that had belonged to Indo-European families in which

38 Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 8-12; Marianne Hirsch, ed., *The Familial Gaze* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1999).

Figure 1 Photographer unknown, Family Hummelgens, Poerworedjo (Java), c. 1904-1908

Source: Tropenmuseum IWI Collection, Amsterdam, inv. nr. 30027510

Indonesian housewives and their offspring are depicted. In contrast to the overwhelming amount of late-colonial depictions of evil *njais* figuring in fictional narratives, the visual portraits in IWI albums of Indonesian women obviously living with European men reveal the "ordinary" women at the heart of Indo-European families. This photograph is one example, a portrait of an Indo-European family dressed according to local customs and posing in a garden. In and around the colonial house, white European and Indo-European women usually preferred to wear the cool, indigenous *sarong kebaya* (blouse and long, wrapped skirt). Men wore white or *batik* trousers and a collarless white shirt, whereas small children played barefoot, wearing comfortable rompers called *tjelana monjet* (monkey suits).[39] In figure 1, a frail old Indonesian woman is seated in the front row both in the centre of the family and of the image. The back of the chair seems to form a crown around her head whilst the bodies of all of the younger women

39 For a discussion of the shifting ways in which dress in the Indies reflected social codes and mixed cultural habits, see Esther Wils and Dorine Bronkhorst, *Tropenecht: Indische en Europese kleding in Nederlands-Indië* (The Hague: Stichting Tong Tong, 1996).

seem to be slightly inclined towards her. The old woman obviously has an honoured place in the family hierarchy.

As there is no caption or other information available telling us the names or relations between the people portrayed, we do not know whether she was married or not to a Dutch *pater familias* (who is probably already dead because there is no man of her age in the photograph). The younger people in the photo are presumably her Indo-European offspring: her sons and daughters, or a combination of her children and in-laws. What can be gathered from this photograph is that the older woman, whom we can safely presume must have been a *njai*, is definitely not hidden in the background. A photograph such as this one therefore shows the gap between prevailing myths concerning *njais*, who were supposedly relegated to the darkest corners of family life, and the social reality in which they were acknowledged – one that persisted during the first half of the twentieth century, as demonstrated by the fact that the photograph was not removed from the album.

The presence of this photo is therefore in stark contrast to the numerous fictional and autobiographical accounts by European authors, both male and female, which from the 1870s onwards portrayed the *njais* as either a social victim of white male lechery or as a murderous demon.[40] Potent negative images of the *njais* were brought into circulation by narrative fiction, which, according to Edward Said, has continued to be one of the most powerful sources of "knowledge" about colonial societies.[41] Even Reggie Baay's much acclaimed *De njai* (*The Njai*) (2008), which reads as a historiography of Indies concubinage, is based on the overwhelming fictional accounts in which the *njai* figure largely features as threatening and evil.[42] Idealisations of

40 See, for example, Tessel Pollmann, "Bruidstraantjes: De koloniale roman, de njai en de apartheid," in *Vrouwen in de Nederlandse koloniën: 7e jaarboek voor vrouwengeschiedenis*, ed. Jeske Reijs et al. (Nijmegen: Sun, 1986), 98-125; Jacqueline Bel, "De memsahib, de njonja en de njai: Seksuele moraal in de koloniale literatuur van het fin de siècle," *Tydskrif vir Nederlands en Afrikaans* 11 (2004): 1-19; Pamela Pattynama, "De revival van de njai-figuur," *Indische Letteren* 26 (2011): 128-143, and *Bitterzoet Indië,* 45-71. An Indonesian representation of the *njais* by the famous Indonesian writer Pramoedya Ananta Toer stands in stark contrast to such contentious European narratives. In *Bumi Manusia* (*This Earth of Mankind*), the first volume of the *Buru Quartet* (1980-88), Ananta Toer presents a fascinating portrait of the intelligent and courageous Nyai Ontosoroh, the Javanese concubine of a degenerated Dutch factory owner, who forces the Javanese protagonist Minke to confront the racial and gender oppression in Dutch colonial society.

41 Edward Said discusses the connections between historical discourse, literary representation, and European strategies of cultural domination in *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994).

42 Reggie Baay, *De njai: Het concubinaat in Nederlands-Indië* (Amsterdam: Athenaeum-Polak & Van Gennep, 2008). The focus on photographs in Baay's subsequent *Portret van een oermoeder*

the *njai* as being a loving, nurturing nanny ("better" than white mothers) exist, and she was also pitied as a victim of colonial rule. In most stories, however, she is depicted as a murderous indigenous intruder and portrayed as the dangerous embodiment of exotic, sleazy sexuality *par excellence*. As the historian Jean Taylor argues: "Whether she had a heart of gold or was crazed by vice the *njai* has continued to complicate the links between the European and the indigenous world".[43] The demonisation of the *njai* as evoked in fiction not only shows the interweaving of private and public domains, but also the interaction of culture and imperialism in Edward Said's terms: "stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world".[44]

The influential anthropologist Ann Stoler asserts that during the Ethical Policy era, questions of racial identity and class distinction pervaded colonial discourses in the Indies, calling into question the criteria by which Europeanness could be defined, citizenship accorded and nationality assigned. Stoler indicated that the problem of "European pauperism" (read: "Indo-Europeans"), heavily debated in government commissions throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, was about "indigent whites and their mixed-blood progeny, mixed-blood European men and their native wives whose life styles indicated not always a failed effort to live up to the standards of bourgeois civility but sometimes an outright rejection of them".[45] Also, in her discussion of housekeeping manuals, which in the Indies proscribed the modern way of life that was required of newly arrived European housewives, Stoler points out that concern for children's "moral environments, bourgeois identity, and sense of racial affiliation" were deeply enmeshed. To become a respectable bourgeois adult European, children in the Indies should distinguish themselves from that "which was uncivilised, lower class and non-European", namely native servants, native mothers and also "Indos".[46] For views on Indo-Europeans, Stoler mainly examined what European colonial authorities observed and communicated about them, discourses through which Indos appear as victims, from a lower, even abject order. Her view of "Eurasians" in *Along the Archival Grain* (2009)

(Amsterdam: Athenaeum, 2010) supports the idea of "realism" and historical life. The book thus contributes to the history of Indonesian women living together with white men and consolidates their "real" existence.

43 Jean Gelman Taylor, "Nyai Desima: Portrait of a mistress in literature and film," in *Fantasizing the Feminine*, ed. Laurie J. Sears, (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1996), 233.

44 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xiii.

45 Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, 107.

46 Ibid., 149, 151, 155.

was based on similar "official" colonial sources. The historian Remco Raben has criticised Stoler's contention that the "orphaned or abandoned status, economic destitution, and racial ambiguity of [the "*inlandsche kinderen*"] joined to make them objects of pity, disdain, and threat". Such "empathic reading", he concludes, "perpetuates the terminology, imagery and perspective of the colonial elite" so that we come to know little about the people concerned, "other than through the eyes of colonial writers".[47] In 1971 Indo journalist and activist Tjalie Robinson expressed his dismay about the persistence of what he called "false observations and false definitions" of the *njai* which all seemed to focus on sex. According to him, *njais* should be seen as transnational and subversive figures who broke down racial and class barriers through their connections to the men and family groups of other "races". Robinson regarded concubinage thus as a variant which was on a par with regular marriages.[48] Similarly, the prominent Indo spokesperson Rob Nieuwenhuys stressed that the form of concubinage practiced by the *njais* was an honourable alternative to marriage. Nieuwenhuys compiled four highly popular books of photographs of *tempo doeloe* Netherlands Indies, of which one, *Komen en blijven* (*Coming and Staying*) (1982) was devoted to the Indo-European community. In this book he gave the *njai* a dignified position in Indo-European history, calling her the foremother of all Indo-Europeans:

> The *njai* not only took care of a man. She could also be the mother of his children … In whatever way one regards her, these indigenous housekeepers are the mothers of all Indo families which make out the largest part of the European community – even up to the census of 1930.[49]

Many local women would have served European men to survive or to improve their status, but we have no direct knowledge of their experiences: there are no personal accounts or memoirs left of the women who lived together with such men. However, it is my contention that images such as figure 1 suggest the self-representations of Indo-European families do not concur with the recurring depictions of murderous or abject indigenous women in official and fictional depictions of mestizo society. The latter relate specifically

47 Remco Raben, "Ambiguities of reading and writing," in *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 165 (2009): 558.

48 Wim Willems, *Schrijven met je vuisten: Brieven van Tjalie Robinson* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2009), 303-305.

49 Rob Nieuwenhuys, *Komen en blijven. Tempo doeloe – een verzonken wereld. Fotografische documenten uit het oude Indië 1870-1920* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1982), 90. My translation.

to emerging white fears of racial contamination, interracial contacts and female sexuality in the transitional Indies world during the era of the Ethical Policy.[50] As is characteristic of the genre of family photo albums in many cultures, the IWI albums do not contain realities which were meant to be kept hidden so as not to upset the carefully fabricated image of family unity. Scandals, scenes of domestic violence and other family dramas were not depicted in family albums.[51] What is, however, obvious from the late-colonial compilations in the IWI albums is that Indo-European families did not shy away from their mixed-race heritage and seem to have proudly presented themselves as families in which all racial groups of colonial times intersect. In these extended families white men shared their lives with Indonesian women and the children whom they raised together. By having themselves photographed in these mixed-race constellations, Indo-European families could definitely not all have been so ashamed of their Indonesian foremothers as popular myth has made us believe. Photographs such as figure 1, in which the *njai* is so obviously represented as an honoured and respected matriarch, testify to that.

Photographic reality

An interesting representation of interracial contacts which goes beyond the victimisation or threatening image of indigenous women is to be found in another IWI album. This album is a visual travel narrative of a "new European", a young Dutchman, Henri D. Schnepper, who left The Hague in 1910 to live in the Indies for several years. Looking through the small album, we follow him on his journey through unknown territory, a world which he obviously found fascinating. Some of the photographs suggest that he worked for the post and telegraph service in different places in the archipelago, probably in Java and Maluku. We see Indonesian street views and groups of European, Indo-European and Indonesian colleagues or friends posing in front of the camera. There are no wedding pictures, no portraits of children, nor any photos of big houses. We may therefore conclude that Schnepper remained a bachelor during his stay in the Indies. Whether he himself compiled the album or someone else (for example, his

50 See also Pattynama "Secrets and danger," 99-101.

51 Annette Kuhn, "The child I never was," in *Family Snaps: The Meanings of Domestic Photography*, ed. Jo Spence and Patricia Holland (London: Virago Press, 1991), 16-34.

Figure 2 Photographer unknown. "A little study in Black and White," c. 1910

Source: Tropenmuseum IWI Collection, Amsterdam, inv. nr. 30010700

mother) to whom he might have sent the photos is not certain. I would like to focus on two intriguing photographs from it.

Figure 2 is a domestic portrait of nine young European men and one Javanese woman sitting on and in front of a bed with an open mosquito net. The fact that one man has his back turned to the camera suggests that the photograph is not a professionally made group portrait; it may have been taken by a friend or a servant. The caption, slightly tongue in cheek, reads in English: "A little study in Black and White". Most probably the men are Schnepper's colleagues and the woman, according to her dress, was a servant in the *logement* where the men stayed. The men are informally dressed in house pyjamas. Remarkably, the caption provides not only the names of the European men, but also the woman's name: "Mimi". In the visual history of the Indies not many Indonesian servants are photographed, let alone referred to by name. Even more intriguing is the intimate positioning on a bed of the lone Javanese woman seated amidst the men. In contrast to Schnepper's laidback posture, who is seated on her left side, and the absence of any sign of energetic action on his side – even his gaze is turned away from the camera – she looks directly into the camera. Her arms are folded in front of her body, which reveals a stubborn presence. "Mimi" is not at all

Figure 3 Photographer unknown, Menggala (Sumatra), 1912

Source: Tropenmuseum IWI Collection, Amsterdam, inv. nr. 30010709

docile. Instead of the ideal of vigorous Western masculinity and the mythical image of subservient or cunning indigenous femininity, this photo suggests inverted racial and colonial relations which differ strongly from the clichéd images in which indigenous women are subordinate to white European men.

The second photo in Schnepper's album that I would like to focus on does not conform to the stereotype of an exploited or wily local woman either (figure 3). In this choreographed image people from obviously different races and classes pose in front of a building. A Dutch signpost labels it as being a "Post, Telegraph and Stamp Office". Schnepper and an unnamed Indonesian woman stand in the middle of the image. Both look with confidence into the camera. The affectionate gesture with which his hand rests on her shoulder and the casualness with which she holds his hand are signs of closeness and intimacy. The photograph evokes an everyday life in which both the white male and the darker woman do not seem troubled by the racial divisions which were becoming more and more *de rigeur*. It could be that in the part of the colony where this photograph might have been taken – possibly a small outpost – there were no white women around, and that the old colonial arrangement of white men taking local lovers and being open about that amongst a group of colleagues was still pervasive.

In any case, the "photographic reality" displayed in Schnepper's photographs diverges from the conflicting official and literary discourses regarding interracial relationships that invaded the Indies after the turn of the nineteenth century. In contrast to the standard textual image of negatively portrayed *njai* figures, the photographs of Henri D. Schnepper, his mates and Javanese women reveal how "normal" interracial relationships actually still were. The casual interracial groups in these photographs seem quite oblivious to the new moral values that supposedly condemned their behaviour. This lends a new interpretation to the ethical ideal of "Association" intended to apply only to governing, westernised elite Indonesians.[52] It also suggests a call for a new focus in studies of colonial society, away from heavy reliance on written texts and intellectuals to alternative sources representing more diverse spheres of life.

During the first half of the twentieth century numerous white male colonial administrators, doctors and engineers arrived in the Indies straight from the Netherlands all set to participate in a steadily growing number of civilising and modernising projects.[53] They would not, however, partake in the old custom of living together with a *njai* and having Indo children. As part of the new ethical project more and more white European women started arriving in the colony, destined to become the wives of the men who in the past would have lived with local women. The visible presence of so many white women triggered the dramatic socio-cultural transition that transformed the traditional mestizo culture into a Eurocentric society increasingly defined by racial and class differences.[54] In the words of Frances Gouda, these women became "symbols for the norms and values which supposedly belonged to a self-righteous European community which was more and more driven by commercial motives".[55] Both at home and in public these women were expected to propagate the virtues of white bourgeois society and to embody the energy, hygiene and ethics that were supposedly inherent to the superior European civilisation. For the European middle class in the colonies, "respectability was a defense against the colonized, and

52 Many thanks to Susie Protschky who pointed this out to me.

53 Hans Meijer, *In Indië geworteld: De twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2004); Gerard Termorshuizen, *Journalisten en heethoofden: Een geschiedenis van de Indisch-Nederlandse dagbladpers 1744-1905* (Amsterdam/Leiden: Nijgh & Van Ditmar/KITLV Press, 2001).

54 Ulbe Bosma, *Indiëgangers: Verhalen van Nederlanders die naar Indië trokken* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2010).

55 Frances Gouda, "De vrouw in Nederlands-Indië: Van mestiezencultuur naar Europese cultuur," *Indische Letteren* 20 (2005): 6.

a way of more clearly defining themselves".[56] Their European background would enable these women to support European men in the Indies on a new moral high ground. They would also sustain the modernising and civilising projects of their husbands, which in turn would legitimate and naturalise Dutch colonial rule and the reaping of economic profits.

Both the demonised *njai* figure and the visible bourgeois identity of European women illustrate how pervasive factors such as gender, race, sexuality and class strongly supported the constitution of a modern colonial society. Colonial communities of the early twentieth century were rethinking the ways in which their authority should be expressed; white Europeans had to "guard" their ranks and "increase" their numbers "like the modernization of colonialism itself, with its scientific management and educated technocrats with limited local knowledge".[57] Each in their own way, Indonesian, white European as well as Indo-European women were essential to the colonial enterprise. They were marking the boundaries of race and upholding the biological and political boundaries on which the power of the Dutch elite rested.[58] During the first half of the twentieth century, formulations to secure European rule and citizenship turned away from interracial concubinage and mestizo customs towards white endogamy, family formation and legal marriage.[59] The fact that the system of concubinage was completely eliminated in the army barracks by 1913 exemplifies the result of a modernised and renovated image of rule. Keeping fighting spirits high in the barracks was the reason why this notorious style of regulation of sexuality had been maintained for a long time, but as emphasis was now being placed on the social position of soldiers, the citizenship of their mixed-race children, and the respectability of colonial authority, interracial concubinage had to go.[60]

56 George Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 5, quoted in Stoler "Carnal knowledge," 81.

57 Stoler, "Carnal knowledge," 74.

58 Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis argue that since men are constituted as the mouthpiece of an ethnic and racial collectivity, and thus constructed as ethnic agents, women are constructed as "guardians of the race": Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis. *Woman-Nation-State* (London: MacMillan, 1989).

59 Stoler, "Carnal knowledge", 74.

60 Petra Groen, "Zedelijkheid en martialiteit: Het kazerne concubinaat in Nederlands-Indië rond 1890," in *Het koloniale beschavingsoffensief: Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië, 1890-1950*, ed. Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009), 25-51; Hanneke Ming, "Barracks-concubinage in the Indies, 1887-1920," *Indonesia* 35 (1983): 92; H.W. van den Doel, *Het rijk van Insulinde: Opkomst en ondergang van een Nederlandse kolonie* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 1996), 178-181; Baay, *De njai*, 120-174.

Figure 4 Photographer unknown, Untitled, c. 1918-20

Source: Tropenmuseum IWI Collection, Amsterdam, inv. nr. 30012875

After racial mixing had become a taboo and Asian-born women were regarded as the main source of white degeneration it became necessary for Indo-European families to "invent" and enact new identities. How did they use the camera to present their everyday lives? How did their photographs chronicle family rituals and how were modes of belonging and difference represented? The IWI photographs suggest that Indo-European families situated themselves in time and place by negotiating an alternative way of belonging and difference in terms of what Michel de Certeau has coined everyday "tactics". Taken from the tradition of "history from below" the "everyday" refers to the way people individualise, re-appropriate and alter laws, rules and symbols in everyday situations.[61] In his discussion of the actions and devices "ordinary" people use to challenge and change rules, codes, norms or rituals, de Certeau points out that "tactic" actions escape exposure. As part of apparent adaptation or conformity, they therefore can

61 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (London: University of California Press, 1984). Also Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century, Volume 1: The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible*, transl. Siân Reynolds (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

be used to appropriate the system for one's own purposes.[62] According to the IWI photographs, Indo-European families did aspire to participate in the Europe-oriented middle-class lifestyles that in the Indies expressed modernity, civilisation and wealth. However, they did not abide by the prevailing inferior formulations of Indo identity included in such lifestyles. Figures 4 and 5 are examples of the many IWI photographs which document everyday situations and tell us "small narratives" about the casual way Indo-Europeans used "tactics" to negotiate the social transitions and transformations taking place in the first half of the twentieth century.

Figure 4 is a striking example of the Indo-European casual style of self-presentation. Family members are gathered in a disorderly part of a garden, with washing lines in the background. They are having tea and snacks which may have been purchased from a salesman going from door to door with a tray or cart stacked with colourful sweets, or *pedis* snacks. These snacks would then be nibbled at by family members, often at tea time around 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Compared to the formality of presentation which Susie Protschky noticed in many photographs depicting tea time among white European families in the Indies, this Indo-European family has taken no trouble at all to imitate the style of presentation characteristic of so many *theeuurtje* photographs.[63] There is no sign of a teapot and the cups and saucers have been put down quite randomly on a much too small little side table and a white bench-like structure. Most family members look straight at the photographer, but a few continue eating and waving their forks. The old Indonesian grandmother, possibly a *njai*, is not seated in the middle but her dark clothing and the formal way in which she holds her cup draw the attention of the viewer. Because of the photographer's standpoint the gaze of the viewer is further drawn not to the teacups, but rather to the plate in the foreground on which a few snacks wrapped in *pisang* (banana) leaves remain. In this way a typical Indo-European custom, the sharing of snacks called *snoepen*, is highlighted.

One of Protschky's key findings is that the genre of *theeuurtje* photographs tends to demonstrate not only familial cohesion but also class solidarity by marking social distinction and differentiation. She noticed striking similarities between the ways in which European and elite Asian

62 De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, xix. See for Indo-European "tactics": Pamela Pattynama, *Bitterzoet Indië*, 194-200.

63 About "theeuurtje" photographs, see Protschky, "Tea cups, cameras and family life". About the Indo-European everyday, see Pamela Pattynama, "The Indisch family: Daily life in early 20th century Batavia," in *Recalling the Indies. Colonial Culture and Postcolonial Identities*, ed. Joost Coté and Loes Westerbeek (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2005), 47-66.

(specifically Javanese) families chose to have themselves depicted at home: "Teacups and cameras were wielded by amateur family photographers to reproduce both the hierarchy and unity that simultaneously divided and connected sectors of elite colonial society in the early twentieth century".[64] In contrast to Protschky's analysis, figure 4 exemplifies the easy and relaxed way the Indo-European family who had donated this album to the IWI collection chose to be captured. My study of the IWI photographs suggests that Indo-European families apparently did not mind having themselves pictured quite distinctly from the style favoured by European and elite Asian families. As Protschky asserted, tea drinking was associated with Dutch middle-class values and had become an important part of colonial society during the first decade of the twentieth century. Figure 4 confirms that Indo-European families participated in this social ritual, but the emphasis is much more on the ritual of *snoepen* than on the ritual of drinking tea. Such photographs can therefore be described as an Indo-European variant of the *theeuurtje* photographs analysed by Protschky.

Figure 5 is a slightly blurred snapshot of a large Indo-European family group of different generations gathered around a smart car. Everybody is neatly dressed, so they are probably not about to drive off to a picnic at the nearby river. The girls are wearing neat dresses with ribbons in their hair, while the older women carry handbags. The boys wear white shirts and even ties. The fact that everybody is wearing shoes is a sure sign of the formality of the occasion. There is no sign of an (indigenous) chauffeur in the photograph. In photographs of white European families the display of cars often represents class and race differences, as Indonesian chauffeurs drove the cars whereas Europeans owned them.[65] Instead, the staging of this photograph – with everybody gathered around the motor car and with paraphernalia such as European clothing and shoes as well as a large house and driveway in a garden enclosed by a whitewashed wall – signals that this Indo-European family wanted to demonstrate their participation in modernity, civilisation, order and wealth. That there was a camera available with which to record the occasion testifies that this well-to-do family was striving towards the idealised modern lifestyle, American fashion and Europe-oriented citizenship in which they obviously wished to participate.

At the same time the photograph discloses traces of a lifestyle which refers to cultural diversity, specifically the traditions of the *tempo doeloe*

64 Protschky, "Tea cups, cameras and family life," 47.

65 Rudolph Mrázek, *Engineers of Happy Land: Technology and Nationalism in a Colony* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), 17.

Figure 5 Photographer unknown, Untitled, c. 1940

Source: Tropenmuseum IWI Collection, Amsterdam, inv. nr. 30034729

mestizo culture. When Hirsch's notion of the "familial gaze" is taken into account – the conventions and ideology of family representation – we notice that although the family is conscious of the camera and that all members are definitely posing in smart clothes, they are still presenting themselves quite informally, especially the small girl in the front, the squatting man on the left, and the young boy leaning against the car. What strikes me specifically is that they perform as an extended family encompassing more than two generations. This is in stark contrast to the photographs taken by new European families in the Indies, which usually show small nuclear family units consisting of a father, mother and two or three children. Such new Europeans evidently had parted from grandparents, nieces and nephews when they left for the colony.

Although the IWI collection contains photographs of nuclear Indo-European families drinking tea in orderly fashion, there are many more IWI photographs of extended Indo-European families reminiscent of the nineteenth-century extended family clans of landowners. This definitely goes for the family portrayed in figure 5, which discloses an image of people demonstrating the traditional Indies world which is their background, but also negotiating Western modernisation. As such this photograph is a good example of the numerous IWI photos in which Indo-European people gather

around and against the background of modern technological objects such as cars, motorbikes, trains, steamships, radios and microphones. The presence of both *Mooi Indië* photos, and public pictures of modern factories, mines, bridges and roads in the albums is another mark of their owners' wish to engage with the technocratic modernism introduced by the Dutch to the Indies. Such eclectic albums suggest that late-colonial Indo-Europeans wished to represent and position themselves demonstrating multiple changing strategies and practices that are often incongruous: on the one hand they aligned with modern European lifestyles on their own terms and took from these what they desired, and on the other hand they maintained mestizo ways of family structure, domestic customs and everyday consumption. In fact, many IWI photographs display what de Certeau calls everyday individualisation, re-appropriation and altering of prejudiced rules and symbols.

Conclusion

As its "social biography" shows, and despite its name, the Indies Scientific Institute collection was compiled eclectically rather than in any systematic way.[66] The IWI photographs were made during a time of transition in which the social standing of Indo-European people was rapidly decreasing and many of them felt in competition with highly educated Indonesians. Indo culture, which always consisted of a mixture of local and imported customs, had been accepted until this "ethical" moment in history, when the new European elites with their imported ways no longer took on mestizo norms, but set divergent standards. The widening gap between mestizo and Eurocentric cultures, and the ways families negotiated the political and social transformations of the time, can be traced in the photographs compiled in the IWI albums.

Since written reports of Indo life from the people themselves are not as readily available as in the case of the white European community, where both men and women were accustomed to keeping diaries and writing long letters to family members in the Netherlands, the IWI photographic collection presents us with a huge amount of rich *visual* information which

66 For the concept of "social biography" see Igor Kopytoff, "The cultural biography of things: Commoditization as process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64-94; Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 13-16.

speaks eloquently and strongly of the everyday of Indo-European families. To begin with, the IWI photographs present signs of the Ethical Policy, which was supposed to introduce modern technologies, civilise, and teach European bourgeois values. The juxtaposition of family portraits with more public photographs presenting on the one hand the modernising, ethical colonial project and on the other, aestheticised Indies landscapes, reveals the families' aspirations to position themselves in contemporary times and space as representatives of a modern Indies. Like white European families, some Indo-European families did depict themselves as small family units drinking tea around a tea table. But they also proudly posed with modern consumer goods such as cars and radios: there are even photographs where family members positioned themselves next to a "proper" water closet. However, the IWI family snapshots more often show large groups of ethnically diverse people including at least three generations of Indo-European, Indonesian, Chinese and white family members, all happily captured in each other's company. Unlike the many images of all-white nuclear families *totok* Europeans have photographed and saved in their family albums, Indo-European families tended to group young and old, friends and many members of the extended family together to be remembered. Significant is the respectful and intimately familiar representation of young and old Indonesian women in photos of Indo-European families, which does not concur in any way with the threatening image of the evil *njai* figure dominating literary narratives. Further, photographic self-representations of Indo families are at odds with the "orphaned or abandoned status, economic destitution, and racial ambiguity of the '*inlandsche kinderen*'" indicated in "official" written accounts of pauperism.

As mediated visual memory, the IWI photographic collection presents us with images and representations which intertwine often incongruous personal and public worlds, as well as desires and conventions. As self-representations and self-constructions the photographs convey the eagerness with which Indo-European families participated in an emerging modern society. They also subtly reveal Indo agency: choices were not only made to maintain old Indo customs and traditions, consciously or unconsciously; photographs also articulated an alternative view of modern, civilised living to the upper-class European vision. What we see in these everyday self-representations of Indo-European families is an "unofficial" construction of historical selves that challenges the conventional "official" constructions of Indo-Europeans by white elites. In capturing both traditional, extended and modern, small Indo-European family groupings in their everyday settings, as well as customary habits and modern technologies, the IWI photographs reveal alternative

stories about the complicated ways in which Indo-Europeans engaged in a changing world, negotiating "ethical" views on sexuality, race and civilisation.

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6 Reversing the lens

Kartini's image of a modernised Java

Joost Coté

Introduction

Raden Ajeng Kartini (1879-1904), generally known for her advocacy of the emancipation of Javanese women, is an iconic figure in the history of the so-called "ethical period" in the Netherlands Indies. Born into an old Javanese dynasty that had developed a long association with the Dutch colonial regime, Kartini was brought up in a household which both benefited from and was critical of colonialism. Part of a second generation of a Javanese elite family that consciously sought out Western education, she reflected the new sense of nationalist consciousness emerging in such circles. Asserting the right of Javanese to access Western education and to participate in the development of their own society, her scathing criticism of contemporary colonial practice and her appeal for recognition of the rights of Javanese women, expressed in both private correspondence and public petitions, appeared also to echo the central tenets of a Dutch agenda to reform colonial policy and practice. Still largely isolated at the beginning of the twentieth century and often designated by critics as unrealistic idealists, these "*ethici*" (the European supporters of reform) advocated a policy of intervention to "uplift" and civilise the inhabitants of the Indies.

As awareness of this opinionated, Dutch-writing Javanese woman spread in Java and the metropolitan Netherlands between 1898 and 1904, Kartini became a reference point for competing agendas in an emerging debate on the new direction of colonial politics within both Javanese and European society. Published extracts of her correspondence in the decade after her death became a vehicle for promoting the cause of colonial reform. Kartini herself, however, aimed at a far more radical agenda than European progressives of her day envisaged or the Javanese "establishment" was prepared to tolerate. Rather than echo the discourse of a *mission civilisatrice* that her European acquaintances espoused, she sought to exploit the hesitant and paternalistic voices of the so-called "ethical period" to communicate an image of a vital and self-assured Java capable of its own renovation. In so doing she made a strategic attempt to exploit the opportunity presented by this apparent newfound interest in native welfare to reverse traditional

colonial perspectives on Javanese. At her disposal were the technologies of the postal service and the camera, the medium of the letter and the photograph.

The story of Kartini does much to reveal the limitations of the ethical era in Dutch colonial politics. Its detail throws into perspective how hesitant and limited the new policy direction was, how resistant to change the institutions and discourses of colonialism were, and indeed, how much it represented little more than what in today's terminology would be referred to as "political spin". As Bloembergen and Raben point out, the "*mission civilisatrice* or the white man's burden [was] how colonial powers justified their intervention in non-Western societies". If the Dutch mission was less ideological than that of other European powers, it equally implied a distinct discourse and practice of "development" which entailed "top-down" intervention, paternalism, and ultimately, the imposition of geo-political control that marked the last four decades of Dutch imperialism.[1] The Ethical Policy, however, was also predicated on a need to *know* the colonial subject.

In this chapter I argue that the "ethical turn" in colonial thinking that emerged at the turn of the twentieth century, though reflected more in discourse than in practice, provided Dutch-literate Javanese like Kartini with the opportunity "to speak to" a more receptive European audience. I show that rather than allowing herself to be the *object* of an emerging popular ethnographic interest, Kartini attempted to educate a Dutch public by redirecting the lens through which Europeans had become accustomed to viewing the colony's indigenous inhabitants. This she did primarily through her writing in which, using the idioms of contemporary Dutch discourse, she pictured for Europeans a Java which they could comprehend. In these early years of an "ethical turn", as well as becoming the subject of ethnographic scrutiny Java also increasingly became the object of photography. Kartini made use of her limited access to both preoccupations to attempt to subvert their colonial forms and present her country and people as active subjects.

1 Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben, "Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië, 1890-1950," in *Het koloniale beschavingsoffensief: Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië, 1890-1950*, ed. Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009), 7-25 at 9, 21. Bloembergen and Raben argue that the term "Ethical Policy" is "inappropriate as a characterisation of the late colonial period" and finally opt for defining "the turbulent changes in the late colonial period" as a form of developmentalism, a complex of "modernity, citizenship and civilisation". Schulte Nordholt posits that the twentieth-century Netherlands Indies could be characterised as "a state of violence": Henk Schulte Nordholt, "Modernity and cultural citizenship in the Netherlands Indies: An illustrated hypothesis," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 42:3 (2011): 435-457 at 436.

Kartini and the "ethnographic turn"

Kartini's correspondence reveals both how little the Dutch public or even the European enclave in the colony knew about the archipelago's inhabitants and how conscious a Javanese elite was becoming of its collective humiliation under colonialism.[2] But her letters also reveal the beginnings of a European interest in the colony promoted by the popular dissemination of geographical and ethnographic information made possible by the technologies of modern communication – transport, the press, popular literature, exhibitions, and not least the medium of photography. This emerging public interest ensured that Kartini's attempt to attract a European audience elicited a response, even if most Europeans continued to regard an active colonial subject as little more than a novelty. At best, for them Kartini appeared to provide evidence that:

> … something is stirring in the faraway East Indies, that a spiritual harvest is beginning to ripen and that it is high time that the best amongst us provide moral and practical support for these young spirits that are beginning to emerge.[3]

This comment by Nellie van Kol, one of the pioneers of the Dutch feminist movement, prefaced Kartini's second article published in the Netherlands, a contribution to a popular women's journal, *Eigen Haard,* in 1903.[4] It was an account of the work of the woodcraftsmen who were producing the newly fashionable carved furniture and Javanese ornaments from the Indies. The essay effectively launched Kartini in the Netherlands beyond the small circle who could recall her involvement in the Exhibition of Women's Work in the Dutch capital five years earlier.[5] Nellie's observation resonated with a new interest in the colonies among the journal's editors and readers. Kartini, however, was only too aware of what really generated this interest in her article, commenting sarcastically:

2 All quotations from Kartini's correspondence are my translations of her original letters held in the archive of the Royal Institute for Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) Archive Inventory 33, Collectie J.H. Abendanon.

3 Nellie van Kol, *Eigen Haard,* 3 January 1903, 10.

4 Kartini, "Van een vergeten uithoekje," *Eigen Haard*, 3 January 1903, 11-16.

5 The *Nationale Tentoonstelling van Vrouwenarbeid* was organised by a consortium of women's groups and held in The Hague between 9 July and 21 September 1898.

> for many we serve as *publicity*! That is very pleasant, I can assure you! I am not bothered by it now. But as long as our cause, for my countrymen, will benefit from it – of what consequence are personal discomforts? *Everything* for *our people*. [original emphasis][6]

To further underline the novelty of the article, in a manner which was to become synonymous with twentieth-century journalism, the editors added a photograph of Kartini and her sisters without her permission. While this secured Kartini's newfound celebrity status in the Netherlands, the resultant notoriety that the photograph elicited arguably contributed to her eventual tragic end.

Five years earlier, in 1898, Kartini had sent a number of paintings, sketches and items of embroidery, as well as an extended written description of the traditional Javanese process of batik, to the exhibition of women's work mounted by the Dutch feminist movement in The Hague.[7] Kartini's bold intervention, albeit undoubtedly encouraged by her European mentor,[8] was met with an initial expression of amazement at her ability to write in fluent Dutch. But then, as Kartini herself ruefully noted later, it was promptly ignored. There was little recognition at the time of what this initiative might actually have implied about the agency of Javanese women, let alone of the significance of the written information. In the event, as Maria Grever and Berteke Waaldijk have noted, neither in the Netherlands nor amongst European women in the Indies was the experience of Javanese women perceived as relevant to a feminist agenda.[9]

Exhibits of "native craft work" and ethnographic collections from the colonies – and even recreations of entire native villages inhabited by "real natives" such as the one created for the Women's Exhibition – had become

6 Kartini to Rosa Abendanon, 7 June 1903.

7 The details of her contribution were reported in the Semarang newspaper, *De Locomotief*: Maria Grever and Berteke Waaldijk, *Feministische Openbaarheid: De Nationale Tentoonstelling van Vrouwenarbeid in 1898* (Amsterdam: IISG/IIAV, 1998), 190, fn 162.

8 Her "mentor" was the wife of the local colonial official, Marie Ovink-Soer, a feminist and minor writer.

9 Grever and Waaldijk, *Feministische Openbaarheid*, 186-192; Joost Coté, "Celebrating women's labour: Raden Ajeng Kartini and the Dutch Women's Exhibition, 1898," in *Een Vaderland voor Vrouwen/A Fatherland for Women: The 1898 "Nationale Tentoonstelling van Vrouwenarbeid" in Retrospect,* ed. M. Grever and F. Dieteren (Amsterdam: IISG/VVG, 2000), 119-135 at 122. The items on display at the exhibition were mainly donated by "old Indies hands" resident in the Netherlands.

common in Europe but popularly perceived as entertaining "curiosities".[10] Only belatedly did G.P. Rouffaer (1860-1928), an early exponent of a new ethnographic interest in Javanese arts and crafts, acknowledge the significance of Kartini's account as a contribution by a native craftsperson herself. It was, he asserted, much more significant than "the information already provided primarily by younger colonial officials in Java with an interest in the question", since

> [as] batiking is primarily the activity of Javanese women, there could hardly be anything more relevant and significant than a Javanese women who herself practices the art of batiking providing her own explanation of the techniques it involves.[11]

For Rouffaer, whose studies of batik until then had depended largely on what was available in Dutch museums, the ethnographic object was no longer just an inert museum specimen but part of a living fabric; not just a timeless artifact, but a product of contemporary production.[12] In this way Rouffaer, perhaps inadvertently, recognised Kartini and her sisters' aim to communicate a sense of their world directly to the women of the Netherlands. In the meantime Dutch feminists had concluded from the display in the Indies section of their exhibition that the quality of indigenous arts and crafts was in decline. It demonstrated for them the necessity of Dutch intervention to improve the manufacture of these newly prized consumables in bourgeois homes in Europe, a task they believed Dutch women could shoulder as their contribution to the imperial mission.[13] This accorded with the nationalist sentiment of feminist agenda that underpinned the Women's Exhibition

10 Marieke Bloembergen, *Colonial Spectacles: The Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies at the World Exhibitions, 1880-1931* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2006), 15.

11 G.P. Rouffaer and H.H. Juynboll, *De Batik-Kunst in Nederlandsch-Indië en haar geschiedenis op grond van materiaal aanwezig in 's Rijks Ethnographische Museum en andere openbare en particuliere verzamelingen in Nederland* (Utrecht: A. Oosthoek, 1914), x-xi.

12 Kartini's brother later arranged for the accompanying photographs, which included images of Kartini and her sisters at work preparing batik: Grever and Waaldijk, *Feministische Openbaarheid*, 191.

13 The President of the Exhibition's Indies department, Mrs Zuylen-Tromp, acted on this sentiment in founding the *Oost en West Vereeniging* (East and West Association), dedicated to fostering interest in and support for the production of "native artifacts". Kartini became its key unpaid agent in Jepara.

as a whole and resonated with a broader public awareness of the Dutch empire developing in the Netherlands at the turn of the twentieth century.[14]

Seemingly, however, little had changed between 1898 and 1903 in the European public's perception of and response to the Indies colonies as Kartini had continued in her attempts to engage the metropolitan Dutch and colonial attention to recognise Javanese aspirations. If she was disappointed in the response of her Dutch sisters in 1898 for recognition, she was certainly prescient in recognising the tenor of an emerging climate of popular and scientific interest in Java that was now moving beyond the narrow confines of the universities and the circles of retired colonials. By the turn of the century *volkenkunde* – the Dutch term for a study that involved an amalgam of anthropological, ethnographic, philological and geographical studies of the colony's inhabitants – had become the key subject in "the curriculum for prospective civil servants, lawyers and government linguists as well as Catholic and Protestant missionaries, all of whose careers were to be in the Netherlands Indies".[15] In the year following her participation in the exhibition, Kartini had published what amounted to her second ethnographic article in the prestigious scientific journal *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde,* describing in detail the traditional wedding rituals of the *peranakan* (Indies-born) Arab community, illustrating the various elements of bridal dress with a series of pen drawings.[16] It was written in the style of an ethnographic study, as a report of an outsider-observer, and, like the previous article on batiking, was further indication of her intent to utilise European textual forms to penetrate the colonial imaginary. Although both Javanese and European custom ensured that her name was not listed as author, it was clear that, reflective of Rouffaer's comment, serious journals such as *Bijdragen* or the *Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap* (*Journal of the Netherlands Geographical Society*) were beginning to change. Mediated by the popular metropolitan and expanding colonial press,[17] the attraction of the sensational colonial novel,[18]

14 Bloembergen, *Colonial Spectacles,* 195; Grever and Waaldijk, *Feministische Openbaarheid*, 182-183.

15 W. Otterspeer, *Leiden Oriental Connections, 1850-1940* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 280.

16 R.A. Kartini, "Het huwelijk bij de Kodjas," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* 6:1 (1899): 695-702.

17 Gerard Termorshuizen, *Journalisten en heethoofden: Een geschiedenis van Indisch-Nederlandse dagbladpers, 1744-1905* (Amsterdam, Leiden: Nijgh & Van Ditmar, KITLV Press, 2001), 157-158.

18 J. Bel, *Nederlandse literatuur in het fin de siècle: Een receptie-historisch overzicht van het proza tussen 1885 en 1900* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1993), 304-313.

and by museum exhibits and photography, and facilitated by improved communications between the Indies and the Netherlands, this growing interest in and information about the Indies was increasingly disseminated to a broader public to shape popular perceptions of the Javanese.

In this process, photography became an important element in galvanising support for the imperialist and nationalistic agenda at home. Photography already had an established position in the Indies in the late nineteenth century through the work of government-commissioned photographers such as Adolph Schaefer and Isodore van Kinsbergen and freelance photographers such as Woodbury and Page, Charles Kleingrothe and C.N. Nieuwenhuis.[19] Prominently featured in ethnographic accounts of the first field trip through Sumatra published in 1877-79, photography was gradually incorporated more widely in documenting ethnographic research on the frontiers of Dutch expansion, such as during the extended explorations of Borneo by the ethnographer A.W. Nieuwenhuis between 1893 and 1900.[20] A decade later, in the hands of the industrialist and urban reformer, H.F. Tillema, the camera and the photograph had become key tools in attracting attention to the unsanitary conditions of colonial cities.[21] In this way, visual imagery contributed significantly in affirming the ontological assumptions regarding the superiority of Western civilisation in general, and in demonstrating its technological superiority in particular. It also provided a potential tool to project an emerging Javanese national consciousness.[22]

In the Netherlands, many advocates of "imperial responsibility", which found formal expression in the Ethical Policy announced in 1901,[23] held

19 J.L. Reed ed., *Toward Independence: A Century of Indonesia Photographed* (San Francisco: Friends of Photography, 1991).

20 For a summary of these major expeditions, see J. Brakels and N. de Jonge, *Indië ontdekt: Expedities en onderzoek in de Oost en de West* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2001). Nieuwenhuis later requested Kartini to arrange for the Jepara woodcrafters to make several boxes to store his photographs.

21 Joost Coté, "Towards an architecture of association: H.F. Tillema, Semarang and the construction of colonial modernity," in *The Indonesian Town Revisited,* ed. P.J.M. Nas (Singapore: LIT Verlag/ISEAS, 2002), 319-347.

22 Bloembergen, *Colonial Spectacles*, 80-88; S. Moon, *Technology and Ethical Idealism: A History of Development in the Netherlands East Indies* (Leiden: CNWS Publications, 2007), 16.

23 The label "Ethical Policy" was coined by Pieter Brooshooft (1845-1921), formerly the influential editor of the Semarang-based newspaper, *De Locomotief,* in his 1901 pamphlet, *De Ethische koers in de koloniale politiek* (The ethical direction in colonial policy). Brooshooft's trenchant critique of colonial policy over a number of years had inspired Conrad van Deventer, formerly a lawyer based in Semarang and later co-owner of the newspaper, to write his article, "Een Eereschuld" (A debt of honour) in 1899, which is usually regarded as the foundation stone of the Ethical Policy.

"that indigenous people needed to learn and change in order to achieve prosperity" but remained uncertain about how this was to be achieved.[24] Understanding native society and "the psychology of the *Inlander* (Native)" became a crucial prerequisite for developing such programs.[25] The general conclusion that had been reached by the beginning of the twentieth century was that "those aspects of Javanese culture that prevented indigenous people from flourishing could be corrected, and the people themselves transformed" but this required a longer term process of *ontwikkeling*, or development, "[needing] more interventionist policies that emphasised the Dutch role as tutors to the indigenous people".[26] The new interest in the indigenous society of the colony and the developing discourse on the duty of European imperialism found support in a broader shift in the political, cultural and social landscape in the Dutch metropole around the turn of the century.[27]

But the popular image of the East was largely based on anecdote and the images reproduced in large quantities, projected in the form of the commercial picture postcard.[28] Estimated to have been produced in the tens of millions globally from the 1890s onwards, the popular picture postcard was "inextricably bound up with the postal service [as well as] developments in printing".[29] Postcards, in turn, drew on traditions established by lithographic illustrations of the popular nineteenth-century travelogue and the commissioned studio portrait photograph, and thus also contributed to the dissemination and popularisation of stereotypical colonial images.[30] Typically, in the case of the Indies, postcards presented "[v]iews of the indigenous population, often called 'native types', of exotic and idyllic landscapes and of antiquities and unusual natural phenomena".[31] As an expression of a European imperial diaspora in Asia, the colonial postcard could represent the exoticism of the Indies as well as be a reminder of

24 Moon, *Technology and Ethical Idealism*, 17.

25 Han Pols, "Psychological knowledge in a cultural context: Theories on the nature of the 'Native' mind in the former Dutch East Indies," *History of Psychology* 10:2 (2007): 111-131.

26 Ibid., 19.

27 Siep Stuurman, *"Wacht op onze daden": Het liberalisme en de vernieuwing van de Nederlandse staat* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1992).

28 Arjun Appadurai, "The colonial backdrop," *Afterimage* 25:5 (March/April 1997), 4-10.

29 Leo Haks, "An overview," in *Indonesia: 500 Early Postcards*, ed. Leo Haks and Steven Wachlin (Singapore: Archipelago Press, 2004), 8-13 at 10.

30 Stephen Grant, *Former Points of View: Postcards and Literary Passages from Pre-Independence Indonesia* (Jakarta: Lontar, 1995), xi.

31 Steve Wachlin, "Early postcards of Indonesia", in *Indonesia: 500 Early Postcards*, ed. Leo Haks and Steven Wachlin (Singapore: Archipelago Press, 2004), 22.

desire and nostalgia emanating from its difference to Europe. Although the growing affordability of the privately owned hand-held camera had opened the way for a more heterogeneous range of visual images to challenge an established visual discourse, both professional and amateur Indies photographers at the turn of the twentieth century remained powerfully influenced by these ubiquitous visual traditions. As a visual record, the picture postcard was, as Jean Taylor has concluded, typically "a contrived record and a record of artifice" that could as easily attest to a "lived" as to a "desired world".[32]

It is in this context that Kartini saw her role as a "Javanese correspondent" to inform and to educate and to give evidence of a Javanese agency. Outside her private correspondence, she established links with various metropolitan Dutch and colonial periodicals which were coming to recognise the value of a "Javanese voice". Prior to her 1903 *Eigen Haard* article, she had been approached by the editors of the Yogyakarta-based women's journal *De Echo* and the popular Dutch women's journal *De Hollandsche Lelie* requesting her to contribute articles. This encouraged her to pursue "[t]he idea of publishing *everything* I *think* about and *feel* relating to the terrible conditions in our Muslim female world [that] has been with me for a long time" (original emphasis). It was something, she wrote, that

> I had considered presenting … as a book in the form of an exchange of letters between two daughters of Regents, one Sundanese and one Javanese. I have already written several letters by way of introduction and have made notes. I will *not* give up the idea although it might be several years before it can be published.[33]

While prevented from "going public" by Javanese custom, and keenly aware herself of the likely conservative reaction to her feminist agenda from within Javanese society, she did not hesitate to use private correspondence as an alternative outlet to express her ideas and as a means of realising her aims. As well as demonstrating her credentials as a "modern girl" and an "informant" on Javanese society, this correspondence clearly indicates she was an avid reader of, and intended to lend support to, the reform polemic

32 Jean Gelman Taylor, "Costume and gender in colonial Java, 1800-1940," in *Outward Appearances: Dressing State and Society in Indonesia,* ed. Henk Schulte Nordholt (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1997), 90.

33 Kartini to Rosa Abendanon, 21 December 1901. She was also approached by the editor of *De Nederlandsche Taal* to contribute to his "journal for Natives" by writing on "topics to deal with 'Native education for girls', 'Something about Native culture' and 'A useful Native institution'".

being expressed in such influential publications as the colonial daily *De Locomotief* and in Dutch periodicals such as *De Indische Gids* to which her father subscribed.

Kartini also shared the European critique of the "high culture" of the royal houses of Surakarta and Yogyakarta. Regarded as emblematic of Javanese culture in nineteenth-century European orientalist discourse,[34] aristocratic Javanese traditions were increasingly coming under critical inspection not only from reform-minded colonial officials and commentators but also from an emerging class of "modern", Western-educated Javanese.[35] For both groups, feudalism formed part of the broader structure of "old-fashioned" colonialism which had sustained it. For Kartini, that "tradition" represented the immediate obstacle to realising her own dream of emancipation, in particular to study in the Netherlands and, more broadly, the major obstruction to the realisation of her vision of a modern Java.[36] But alongside her criticism of feudal attitudes towards women, Kartini also voiced the simmering criticism of colonial practice circulating within the Javanese civil service, the *pangreh praja*, that her male relatives gave her personal insight into.

Kartini and photography

Kartini's ability to effectively communicate, largely via correspondence, an image of what she saw as the Java that was to be and of herself as "a real person" was in the first place made possible by her ability to satisfy the newly fashionable curiosity, and employ the language, style and tropes that formed the ideational world of her correspondents and readers. These individuals were, admittedly, already ideologically receptive to her overtures and represented a loosely linked alliance of socialist, liberal, feminist and Christian advocates of what became known as the Ethical Policy.[37] In the

34 See Heather Sutherland, *The Making of a Bureaucratic Elite: The Colonial Transformation of the Javanese Priyayi* (Singapore: Heineman Educational Books, 1979); John Pemberton, *On the Subject of "Java"* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

35 A stark example of this is cited by Hilda de Booy who mentions in a letter to her mother that Kartini's father refused to visit the royal courts since this would oblige him "to go bare-chested and with loose hanging hair and sit at the bottom of the steps" and would require his daughters "to be completely décolleté, their necks covered in yellow paste and like that crawl in file before the Sultan of Solo": H. de Booy-Boissevain, Letter to her family, 8 October 1900.

36 The colonial administration was increasingly using education – but only for men – rather than birth as a criteria for selecting Javanese officials: Van den Doel, *De Stille Macht*, 144.

37 Each of her female correspondents declared themselves to be feminists and were to a greater or lesser extent active in the Dutch feminist movement, while her male correspondents

end, despite her best efforts – or indeed because of them – in presenting herself as a modern, aware and intelligent woman, Kartini was destined to remain "that extraordinary Javanese girl": a novelty for her European interlocutors. At the same time, she represented a potential threat to the colonial status quo. Thus, at the turn of the century, she remained trapped between the established nineteenth-century ethnographic and patriarchal discourses that continued to dominate colonial policy-making and the anxieties of a fading traditional Javanese elite, caught in the respective social and cultural institutions each was concerned to maintain against the encroachments of modernity.

The prescriptions of colonial society, of Javanese tradition and the tyranny of distance from the Netherlands limited her ability to access a wider public. Although once she was better known Europeans came to visit her in Jepara, and while she travelled regularly – to visit members of her extended family, to the nearby city of Semarang and even once to the colonial capital – Kartini could only sustain a network of "useful" European contacts via correspondence. The private letter thus provided the training ground for, and almost the only means of formulating, communicating and testing, the ideas that she hoped to be able to articulate publicly in the future. Realisation of even the limited successes she achieved in her brief lifetime thus required an effective and indeed extravagant use of the colonial postal service. Often, when she considered it urgent, Kartini sent off multiple letters, consisting of twenty or thirty pages on consecutive days. In between letters, she employed the *briefkaart*, the prepared lettercard – then only recently introduced in the colony – for conveying an immediate communication.[38] Regularly enclosed with the letter were photographs, which represented one further element in her communications arsenal for "educating" the Dutch.

Kartini was clearly aware of the importance of the power of photography. A word search of a new consolidated edition of Kartini's extant correspondence[39] in English translation shows that there are references to photography

were prominent within differing streams of contemporary progressive movements. Scattered evidence in Kartini's correspondence indicates she also corresponded with Western-educated Javanese men, in particular the students of the prestigious school for training indigenous doctors, STOVIA (*School tot Opleiding van Indische Artsen*), the later founders of Budi Utomo (1908).

38 Haks, "An overview," 10. Haks estimates that use of lettercards only emerged at the beginning of 1890, about the same time as picture postcards.

39 Joost Coté, ed. and trans., *Kartini: The Complete Writings, 1898-1904* (Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2014).

("photograph", "photographer", "portrait", "snapshot", "camera") in over half of the letters that have survived. While the majority of these references relate to the receipt or the sending of portrait photographs – a ubiquitous visual form of communication in use amongst colonials at the time – the letters also contain a robust discourse on the importance of the camera and the photograph in conveying the information necessary to advance her agenda to educate Europeans about Javanese culture and society.

An examination of the Kartini archive that consists of more than thirty photographs reveals examples of four genres which were in place at the turn of the century.[40] Each photo type carried implications of a particular worldview. The most representative type of photograph in the Kartini archive is the studio portrait, or "*potret*", as well-established a medium within the Javanese ruling classes as it was within colonial European society, to underwrite a colonial hierarchy. Whether portraying the pomposity of the colonial official that Kartini so effectively satirises in her correspondence, or the air of traditional authority of the Javanese *bupati*, the official portrait photograph – or its miniaturised version, the personalised visiting card – belonged to an earlier era of colonial relations. With its emphasis on the outward indicators of hierarchy, the formal studio photograph flourished in the Indies well into the twentieth century. It enabled the Javanese elite to manage their public persona within the colonial context: the studio photograph could exhibit the requisite display of European accoutrements and the insignia of their colonially-designated office, while ensuring that fundamental cultural traditions, such as polygamy, remained unphotographed and thus hidden from the colonial gaze. Only later would a generation of Western-educated middle-class Javanese men dispense with the remaining signs of their Javaneseness to employ the studio photograph to demonstrate their more thorough "modernness".[41]

As Kartini's correspondence reveals for her own family, at the turn of the twentieth century there were increasing inconsistencies in how a

40 The majority of photographs considered in this essay are to be found in the Image Collection of the Royal Society for Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (*Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, KITLV) in Leiden, the Netherlands. One further reference is to a photograph held by the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam. All identified photographs (and others) are available to view online via the respective websites of these institutions.

41 Jean Taylor has argued that, as the twentieth century advanced, the portrait photograph of the Javanese in Western attire allowed the Javanese elite "to hide their Indonesianness … in order to be treated as if they were Dutch" so that in time, a "Javanese costume" increasingly came to suggest the "pre-modern and the pretense of power". This dichotomy, however, applied to a somewhat later period. See Taylor, "Costume and gender," 90.

hybridised *Indisch* (Indies) culture was being played out within the upper echelons of Javanese society. This makes it difficult to draw conclusions from the photographic record in this period. There were clear differences, for instance, in her father's generation with regard to the observance of Javanese tradition – her uncle for instance strenuously attempted to prevent Kartini from pursuing her educational goals – although both were Western-educated and highly regarded by the colonial administration as effective, "modern" Javanese regents. Differences in lifestyle and attitude are equally evident within Kartini's generation, as her accounts of her older and younger siblings reveal. Yet these differing attitudes to the practice of tradition did not in any sense lessen their identification and aspirations as Javanese.

In contrast to the formal official studio portraits of her father and future husband – both prominent regents within the Javanese department of the colonial bureaucracy – Kartini's use of studio photographs of herself with her close sisters served to reinforce her personal bonds with her European acquaintances.[42] With Rosa Abendanon, her key correspondent, photographs were exchanged each year and carried short messages confirming their friendship. The portrait photographs Kartini received were arranged in frames in her bookcase, acting as constant reminders of her distant friends. Kartini also maintained a photograph album for visiting cards carrying smaller photographic images that she was sent by her many correspondents from Batavia as well as the Netherlands. In an age of limited travel, and within the context of this more intimate community, portrait photographs together with the regular receipt of mail provided a sense of proximity and immediacy of contact in which the conventional formal implications of that genre were defaced.

Full-length photographs of Kartini and her sisters taken between 1900 and 1903 were produced at one of two studios in Semarang, "Atelier Helios" and Charls & Co.[43] Each shows the women – initially three, but after the marriage of the younger sister's marriage only two – formally arranged

42 These are described in a curatorial note on similar photographs held by the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam (KIT), as "kabinetfoto's", or cabinet photos, and defined in the Dutch online Encyclopedia (www.encyclo.nl) as "Photographs pasted onto pre-printed and embossed cards measuring approximately 110 by 165 mm."

43 A complete listing of photographic studios is provided in Museum voor Volkenkunde, Rotterdam, *Toekang Potret: 100 Years of Photography in the Dutch Indies 1839-1939* (Amsterdam: Fragment Uitgeverij, 1989). It lists the Atelier Helios as associated with the firm Schütz, though this is not identified on the portrait itself. Two Schütz studios existed in Semarang between 1900 and 1910, and there was another "Atelier Helios" in Surabaya. This list indicates that in Semarang, as in the other major Javanese cities at this time, European (mostly German) names dominated this business until the middle of the following decade, after which Chinese and Japanese owned

around an item of furniture against a studio backdrop. These were similar to the formal studio photographs of parents, R.M.A.A. Sosroningrat and R.A. Moeryam, also by Atelier Helios, evidently taken in the previous decade,[44] and of her future husband, R.M.A.A. Djojo Adiningrat by Foto Atelier Tee Han Sioe in Rembang.[45] As well, there are two formal studio photographs of Kartini and her husband taken in December 1903 soon after their wedding at the same Rembang studio.[46]

Presented wearing the style of Javanese *sarong* and *kebaya* that had become the norm in the course of the nineteenth century, the five extant photographs (one each from 1900, 1901 and 1903 and two from 1902) of Kartini and her sisters appear to be standard studio photographs of representatives of the Javanese elite class. They are expressive of a new age perhaps only in the fact that their subjects were unmarried *priyayi* women but appear to make no other apparent claim to "modernity".[47] However, inscriptions on the back, and the accompanying correspondence, suggest an attempt to infuse these formal images with a new life. In sending her 1900 photograph, which is inscribed "In fond memory of 8-9 Aug" (a reference to the occasion when the women first met in Jepara), Kartini apologised in her accompanying letter to Rosa for the dark (traditional) colouring of her clothes. It is evident that in the following and subsequent years, the studio portraits present her and her sisters in more "modern" light-coloured fabric suggestive of the new Chinese and Eurasian-influenced designs from her region of the north Javanese coast (figure 1).[48]

It is probable that this marked change in attire coincided with the switch from the Atelier Helios that her father had employed earlier to the Charls and Co. studio. Its owner, J.F. Charls, originally with G.A. Lambert photographic studios in Singapore and later a partner in a Surabaya studio, had been honoured for his photographic work at the 1893 *Tentoonstelling* (exhibition) in Batavia with a "gold medallion" and in 1901 Charls had just returned from Europe where he had "investigated the latest developments

studios, initially established in smaller towns, such as Rembang, tended to dominate the list. The Rembang studio, Foto Atelier Tee Han Sioe, used by Kartini's husband, is not listed.

44 Photograph of Sosroningrat, KITLV Image Collection, Image 15487; photograph of R.A. Moeryam, KITLV Image Collection, Image 15488.

45 Photograph of Djojo Adiningrat, KITLV Image Collection, Image 15471. This is dated in the archive as c. 1903 but is quite evidently older.

46 Photographs of Kartini and R.M.A.A. Djojo Adiningrat, KITLV Image Collection, Images 15469, 15470.

47 KITLV Image Collection, Images 15465, 15466, 15467, 15468.

48 H. Veldhuisen, *Batik Belanda 1840-1940: Dutch Influence in Batik from Java, History and Stories* (Jakarta: Gaya Favorit Press, 1993).

Figure 1 Studio Charls & Co. (Bojong-Semarang), Kartini and her sisters, Kardinah en Roekmini, 1901

Source: KITLV Image Collection, Leiden, Image 15466

in his field".[49] The lighter attire and more relaxed pose of the three women (even more marked in the 1902 studio photograph) were possibly evidence of ideas he brought back but equally reflected the development of the growing friendship with Rosa. Each photograph recorded an anniversary and was inscribed with a brief personal note. In 1901, Kartini sent a *potret* of the three sisters as a birthday card. On the back she wrote "Hello dearest, here we are coming to wish you our warmest regards for 1 Aug 1901, hoping fervently that you will continue to celebrate this day in good health for a long time to come."

Although the black-and-white photographs fail to define the full effect of their modern styling, several parallel descriptions of Kartini in 1900 – the only surviving physical descriptions of Kartini and her sisters – on the occasion of their reception at the Governor-General's palace and at dinner with the Abendanons, more clearly confirm the subtle modifications Kartini and her sisters inserted in this traditional form. Dr Nicolas Adriani, missionary linguist and fellow dinner guest on the latter occasion, described the young women dressed "in beautiful white silk jackets with pink flowers, hair in a bun and a small gold necklace on their neck".[50] Hilda de Booy's account of Kartini at the Governor-General's reception in a letter to her mother noted:

> The three girls … were wearing a light blue kebaya bordered with silver piping and a variety of gold jewellery. As well, [they wore] beautiful sarongs and bare feet in slippers.

In contrast, she added, "The Raden Ayu wore a kebaya of dark silk".[51] The elderly Jacques Abendanon was similarly able to recall in 1922 "Kartini and her two younger sisters Roekmini and Kardinah … in their elegant national costumes, a light coloured silk kabaya and a batik sarong".[52]

These colourful descriptions encourage one to read the black-and-white photographs as self-presentations of the "thoroughly modern girl" Kartini represented herself as in her correspondence. The comments also reveal how even these more cultured colonials were "surprised" at Kartini's confident presentation of her modern "Javaneseness" in this very European context. As Kartini recognised, and as these observations clearly indicate, for them

49 Additional note supplied with Tropenmuseum Amsterdam, inv. nr. 60033327.

50 H. Kraemer and A. Adriani, *Dr N. Adriani* (Amsterdam: H.J. Paris, 1935).

51 Hilda, letter to her mother, 1900, www.egoproject.nl/archief-debooijfamilie/H.G%20de%Booij-Boissevain.htm.

52 Abendanon, Speech, 1922, KITLV Special Collections H879.

Figure 2 Photographer unknown, Kartini as child with siblings, c. 1885

Source: KITLV Image Collection, Leiden, Image 503182

she was as an exotic object, suggesting they, too, remained largely locked into the images of "the native" recycled in nineteenth-century orientalist writing, ethnographic displays and photographs, and institutionalised by the colonial bureaucracy. It is then not surprising that even these *ethici*, although they had been sympathetic correspondents and held ideas on colonial policy markedly in advance of their contemporaries, three years later acquiesced with the judgements of her (male) Javanese guardians and colonial bureaucrats that Kartini should be denied the opportunity to study in the Netherlands – and should marry.

If Kartini was able to subtly subvert the conventions of the colonial studio photograph in an attempt to present herself as a modern Javanese, her correspondence suggests that the mobile camera had also become part of her world at the beginning of the century and was now potentially at her disposal. The photographic archive also contains several "at home" photographs that indicate a gradual change in the presentation of their subjects. The earliest in this series is thought to be from 1885 and shows a young Kartini in a group of six siblings (excluding the three older boys then at boarding school and the two youngest not yet born) without their parents (figure 2).[53]

53 The archival inventory gives the date as c. 1885.

Figure 3 Photographer unknown, R.M.A.A. Sosroningrat, R.A. Moeryam and six of his seven younger children, c. 1895

Source: Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. nr. 10018778

The children, dressed in Javanese sarong, are presented formally arranged in a setting that appears to be the regent's residence. There is little evidence of "modernity" other than the possibly unusual fact that this records an "internal" scene focusing on a group of *priyayi* children. A later undated "family photo" (figure 3), but evidently produced in an unidentified studio, suggests that this European-styled "family image" was also finding its way into the formal photographic record of modernising elite Javanese families. While stylised and adorned by the usual studio props, it presents a significantly bright – more modern – image than the earlier photograph. It is hardly distinguishable from European family portraits of the time and photographic settings still evident today.

A later photo (figure 4), possibly from 1903, captures a similar image but now at home. Here Kartini's father is photographed with his five unmarried daughters arranged on both sides, in the regent's brightly lit office. It sug-

Figure 4 Photographer unknown, Kartini with her father and three sisters, c. 1903

Source: KITLV Image Collection, Leiden, Image 503281

gests not only a proud *pater familias* but also exudes an image of a modern official and, perhaps as significantly, respects the position of the women.[54]

The utilisation by Javanese families of means such as Kartini's of the services of both the studio and travelling photographers to record family "moments" suggests that their motivations were likely to have been no different from those of contemporary European colonial families of means. This small family sample from the turn of the century also suggests that, as such Javanese families increasingly accommodated to European domestic culture, and the technology became less complex, the stylisation associated with the formal studio photograph gradually disappeared. At first glance, these photographs ostensibly appear as straightforward "family photographs" in the European genre, except that they intentionally avoid any reminder of the cultural chasm that separated the European and Javanese cultures – the fact of her father's polygamy. This occurs, firstly, by the exclusion of the father's co-wife, Kartini's birth mother, from the visual image and secondly, by avoiding any distinction between the children of the

54 This is in contrast to another studio photo of her father seated with strategically arranged furniture and tropical plant: KITLV Image Collection, Image N503279.

two mothers. Significantly, Kartini also avoided initially mentioning this to even her closest friends despite (or because of) the fact that she identified polygamy as the most serious obstacle to modernising domestic relations.

Two further photographs, dating from the time after Kartini's marriage in November 1903, show Kartini in domestic settings in Rembang. The first, taken soon after her arrival in her new home, is an informal photograph of her husband and three of her sisters and was intended as a keepsake for her friends the Abendanons.[55] The second is of Kartini and her sisters play-acting a Japanese tea ceremony (figure 5). Dressed in what appears to be *yukata*-style Japanese kimono, and displaying a set of Japanese teacups, the photograph can be interpreted as reflecting the more cosmopolitan environment of her new surroundings. Javanese women dressed as Japanese might suggest a playful caricature of the contemporary European interest in *japonisme*.[56]

Had she had opportunity to wield a camera herself, the modern photograph would have become a crucial tool for Kartini exploring such diverse aspects of Javanese society and in presenting her vision of Java to what she hoped was a more receptive colonial audience. Three further photographs taken "at home" are more particularly representative of the genre of the contemporary colonial "ethnographic" photograph that would have been at her disposal. They give evidence of how Kartini may have used photography in presenting an "ethnography of the Javanese" to accompany her extensive literary representation of her society. The first, apparently arranged by her brother, Sosrokartono, was intended to accompany the publication of Kartini's article on batik. It shows the sisters engaged in the act of batiking.[57] The second, possibly the most famous, shows Kartini and her sister Roekmini conducting their first classroom in one of the outbuildings of the official residence complex.[58] This may have been arranged by the Director of Education, Jacques Abendanon, who had encouraged Kartini to commence a small school as part of his agenda to establish schools for Javanese girls. Abendanon, who was also Director of Native Industry, had also arranged

55 Kartini in Rembang with sisters and husband: KITLV Image Collection, Image 15472.

56 I am indebted to Natsuko Akagawa, researcher in twentieth-century Asian heritage, for pointing out the particularities of this photograph for me. For another take on the significance of teacups, see Susie Protschky, "Tea cups, cameras and family life: Picturing domesticity in elite European and Javanese family photographs from the Netherlands Indies, ca. 1900-42," *History of Photography* 36:1 (2012): 44-65.

57 The photographs included with Kartini's 1898 article on batik in Rouffaer and Juhnboll's 1914 publication on Javanese batik, *De Batik-Kunst in Nederlandsch-Indië,* appear to have also been professionally shot photographs taken in 1900: KITLV Image Collection, Image 12541. Rouffaer refers to Sosrokartono's involvement in a preface to Kartini's article.

58 KITLV Image Collection, Image 503280.

Figure 5 Photographer unknown, Kartini with sisters and Japanese tea ceremony in Rembang, 1903. With inscription: "Met hartelijke groeten" (With warm regards)

Source: KITLV Image Collection, Leiden, Image 15473

to have a series of photographs taken of Jepara wood carving to accompany Kartini's 1903 article on the subject published in *Eigen Haard*, sensing that this would be useful in promoting a native craft industry.[59] In regard to these projects, the agenda of Kartini and this liberal supporter of an Ethical Policy coalesced, even if their motivations differed.[60]

For this particular family, with its long association over three generations with an educated European elite, and its cultural positioning in the cosmopolitan culture of the Javanese *Pasisir* (north coast)[61] outside the formality associated with the central Javanese royal courts, these differing genres of photographs need not be read as attempts to mimic or aspire to Europeanness. Although eagerly read by Kartini's European visitors and correspondents as indications of the success of a European civilising process, they can more accurately be seen to represent confident self-images of a

59 Ibid., Image 15489.

60 As an indication of the slow acceptance of a more "ethical" colonial policy, both Abendanon's school plan, proposed in 1901, and craft industry proposed in 1904, were rejected as idealistic and unnecessary by the central colonial government.

61 Adrian H. Vickers, "From Bali to Lampung on the Pasisir," *Archipel* 45 (1993): 55-76.

modernising Javanese household and of an emerging Javanese modernity. They were generated by the same motives of family pride, a desire to record family history, to "show off" to visitors, to record important activities, and to provide personal gifts, as motivated their European contemporaries in the colonies and the metropole. The important difference, however, that their contextualisation in the extant correspondence makes clear is that they also represented a claim that the subjects of the photographs were entitled to an equal place in the modern world.

The extant photographs from the Kartini archive so far considered can be distinguished from the other category of photographs in the Kartini collection: the "*kiekje*", or snapshot.[62] "*Kiekje*" was the term reserved for the informal image produced by the recently popularised hand-held, and typically privately owned, camera. Already by the turn of the century evidently an essential accoutrement for the discerning European traveller and colonial sojourner, it was yet to "travel" to the provinces and, as Kartini complained, was a luxury she could not afford.[63]

The first evidence of Kartini's experience of the private camera, then, came during her visit in 1900 to the colonial capital, to the home of Hendrik de Booy, adjutant to the new Governor-General Rooseboom, and his wife, Hilda Boissevain. Both were from prominent and cultured Dutch families who had only recently arrived in the colony. They had brought the camera with them to document their temporary stay in the colonies. As a record of the only time the two women met, the surviving photographs of the visit remained an important physical reminder for them both.[64]

In a letter to Hilda two years later Kartini recalled her visit to the botanical gardens at Buitenzorg (figure 6):

> … the snap that your husband took of all of us in that glorious garden, by the pond with the flowering lotuses [has] … faded rather badly but I wouldn't dream of throwing it away since there are so many memories attached to it.[65]

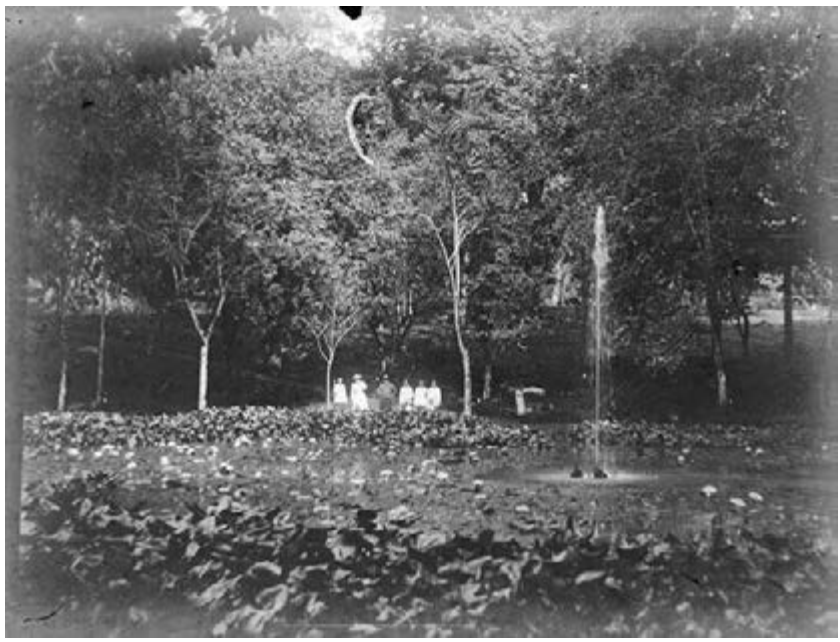
62 Karen Strassler in *Refracted Visions: Popular Photographs and National Modernity in Java* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 41, refers to the same letter and following the Symmers translation of *Door Duisternis Tot Licht*, uses the awkward literal translation, "peeps".

63 *Toekang Potret,* 31, 163-164. Amateur photography was facilitated by the introduction of the Kodak camera after 1888 and of the newer "Brownie" after 1900.

64 There are two extant photos from this visit, one a distant shot of the group in the botanical gardens reproduced in Figure 6, another, a close-up of the sisters with Hilda and her son (KITLV Image Collection, Image N503278). Hilda maintained a sporadic correspondence with Kartini and in 1913 became a major supporter of the Kartini Foundation, giving a series of lectures throughout the Netherlands to raise money for the establishment of the Kartini Schools.

65 Kartini to Hilda de Booy, 21 March 1902.

Figure 6 Hendrik de Booy, Kartini and sisters with Hilda de Booy-Boissevain in the botanic gardens at Buitenzorg (Bogor), August 1900



Source: KITLV Image Collection, Leiden, Image 503277

It was during this visit that Kartini was introduced to what amounted to the inner circle of the Indies-based "ethici" *avant la lettre*. Newly arrived from Europe and informed by recent debate on colonial policy, they were keen to disassociate themselves from the narrow-minded culture of nineteenth-century colonialism and many, like the newly appointed Governor-General and his adjutant, could be categorised as "progressive liberals".[66]

Hendrik de Booy's "snap" of the "Jepara sisters", as Hilda referred to them, in the company of his wife and child, expressed a new kind of modern encounter between metropolitan Europeans and Javanese. Hilda's account of the occasion, indeed, portrays Kartini and her sisters as tourists to this epicentre of colonial rule, the kind of occasion with which the personal camera became ineluctably associated:

66 Both Governor-General Rooseboom and his adjutant were members of the Dutch *Liberale Unie*, a progressive liberal party.

> In Batavia the girls went and looked at everything, the opium factory, etc., etc. Here [Buitenzorg] they visited the Institute for the Insane between 1 and 3. What they achieved in one day is almost impossible to imagine …[67]

But the snapshot also imaged the kind of encounter that Kartini had envisaged could be possible between Javanese and Europeans and the memory recorded by the photograph provided the basis upon which she built her vision of a Javanese future.

Kartini and the camera

By 1903 Kartini's world was changing. Newspaper reports of her meeting with the parliamentary leader of the Democratic Socialist Workers Party and key advocate of colonial policy reform, Henri van Kol, had made public Kartini's aim to study in the Netherlands and had turned her into the topic of colonial gossip. Kartini was kept busy receiving European visitors and arranging orders for customers in Europe and the colonial capital keen to obtain items of hand-carved furniture featuring modernised Javanese motifs. But her letters also convey a change in Kartini's perceptions of her own Javanese world that accompanied a reconciliation with her birth mother who had long fought against her daughter's feminist ideas.

Kartini had made a decision – prompted by Director of Education, Jacques Abendanon – not to go to the Netherlands after all and was now writing privately about her growing interest in traditional Javanese beliefs and practices. This deepened interest in the traditions of her culture coincided with an increased preoccupation with *the idea* of the camera and the value of the photograph to convey a more immediate sense of the "real Java". The "real Java" lay beyond the formality of the royal Javanese courts steeped in traditions celebrated by European orientalists; it was located outside the orbit of European colonialism and beyond the stylised representation of the studio portrait. It had to be experienced first-hand, and to be communicated; it needed to be recorded by the eye of the mobile camera "in the field". The remaining part of this chapter will explore the way Kartini imagined how the camera and the photograph would enable her to communicate her vision of Java to a Dutch audience intent upon ethical reform.

In what became an increasingly evident preoccupation, in her later correspondence Kartini recounted her growing interest in this everyday

67 Letter from Hilda de Booy to her mother, 1900.

Javanese world. Describing her attendance at a traditional village ritual to give thanks for much needed rain, she wrote:

> I so often wished that I had a camera and was able to take snapshots when we have seen some unique customs of our people that no European is able to witness. So many things we would like to record in word and picture which would be able to give the European a clearer impression of us Javanese. Someone has promised me to photograph the complete growth cycle of the *padi* [rice], the *karbouw* [oxen] and the *boca angons* [shepherd boys] included. I would then provide the accompanying description as I, being a child of the people, saw and understood these things. Yesterday I met that person but he cannot yet carry out his promise because of the mud in the *sawahs* [rice fields]; his equipment would sink. [68]

The discussion of photography here highlights Kartini's conception of her role as a "cultural translator". Shaped by the growing European academic and popular interest in colonial ethnography, the idea of photographing local traditions may well have been suggested by one of the numerous visitors to the Jepara residence with whom she discussed her ideas.[69] Photographers were increasingly being employed in more isolated areas "to record economic changes such as the expansion of different forms of commercial agriculture".[70] But the correspondence suggests that Kartini's motivation was a concern to educate the Dutch public, and as such explicitly expressed her sense of national Javanese cultural identity. Where in central Java commercial developments included the rapid expansion of sugar and tobacco plantations, the quotation suggests that, in contrast, Kartini (and her father) were intent on documenting traditional *sawah* cultivation, the mainstay of rural Java. This, and activities such as wood carving, represented aspects of the traditional Javanese economy that were only then beginning to attract the attention of "ethically minded" reformers.[71]

68 Kartini to J.H. Abendanon, 17 February 1903.

69 Amongst her significant visitors apart from J.H. Abendanon, the Director of Native Education and Industry, were H.J.W. van Lawick van Pabst, the colony's Inspector of Cultures, and M.C. Brandes, an early promoter of the commercialisation of Javanese craftwork.

70 *Toekang Potret*, 91.

71 Implementation of the official Ethical Policy, such as it was, was constrained in practice by a conservative colonial bureaucracy and the "colonial lobby" representing the interests of Dutch planters and bankers: see A. Tasselaar, *De Nederlandse koloniale lobby: Ondernemers en de Indische politiek 1814-1940* (Leiden: CNWS, 1998).

The letter from which the above quotation is taken begins with a description of the ritual to be photographed:

> Before this [ritual took place] a "*sembayang istica*" [ritual prayer] had also been held in other places but nowhere else did a single drop of rain fall and, as it happened, we had not been in attendance at any of these other ceremonies. This had led our naive, childlike people to draw the conclusion that we had added power to this last prayer appeal; that was why it was immediately answered. Really, such a childlike trusting belief is touching.
> It had also been Father's idea to have photographs taken of the ceremony; I would then provide an accompanying description. An acquaintance from here who photographs quite well promised to come over soon. Father will then provide a *slametan* [Javanese thanksgiving ceremony] and call up the people again to hold a prayer meeting.[72]

In this letter to the Director of Education Kartini was writing as an "ethnographic reporter" for a European audience. It was a similar role to that which she had been performing as intermediary in the promotion of Javanese woodcraft. The occasion which she reports on in this letter is one of only three extended accounts in her correspondence where she placed herself in a context with "ordinary people"; the most extended account relates to her association with Javanese wood craftsmen. Kartini's ethnographic curiosity was, therefore, in many respects similar to that of the reform-minded Europeans who came to visit her in Jepara. It could be said that the *ethici* provided Kartini with a role model except that, unlike her European interlocutors, Kartini was situated inside Javanese society. However, as member of a Javanese elite, she also stood outside everyday Javanese society. Thus, what she envisaged in her correspondence, to be part of the world she was describing, remained largely a "wish":

> I would very much like to live in the midst of a *desa* or *kampong* [village], amongst the people. This has always had a great appeal for me, I know that then our people would come to hold me closer to their hearts. You can only learn about the soul of whatever people it may be after you have lived in their midst…
> We try as much as possible to have contact with the people and when we go out alone then we always go and visit one or more *kampong* houses. In

72 Kartini to Jacques Abendanon, 17 February 1903.

> the beginning they regarded this as rather strange but now they think it is nothing unusual any more.
> The hand of a child is quickly filled – and so is the hand of a child-like people. They are very sensitive to genuine kind-heartedness and also have a good sense of humour.[73]

In this early moment in the trajectory towards Indonesian nationalism, in seeking to inform her European correspondents about Javanese society, Kartini can be seen to be implicitly annunciating a doctrine of Association *avant la lettre:* of wanting to "work together" as equals.[74] It soon became evident, however, that the "association" implied in the Ethical Policy's announced concern to "uplift" the people meant conformity to European objectives. Kartini herself came to accept that her goal for studying in the Netherlands could more effectively be achieved by reintegrating herself into Javanese society in reluctantly accepting a marriage which offered this possibility.

Kartini's self-defined future role combined the taken-for-granted traditional authority she inherited from her position within Javanese society with the modern (European) role of detached observer and reformer. However, any similarity with the position of her European friends which this might suggest has its limits. Kartini's formulation of her role, as articulated most explicitly at this time in a lengthy response to a Dutch parliamentary questionnaire, generally known as "Give the Javanese education!", expressly carried with it the demand that the Javanese nobility, not Europeans, had the moral responsibility for the care of "her people". This revealed the Javanese aristocracy's sense of a hereditary "right to rule" which expressed itself in resistance to colonial domination and its assumptions about the "brown race". In the memoranda she prepared at the beginning of 1903, Kartini insisted that European attempts at reform without direct and full participation of Java's own leaders would mean "that important work will not be able to prosper well regardless of how many white people might expend all their energy and love to it".[75] Like her brother in 1899, Kartini expressly articulated the demand that Javanese leaders – including women

73 Ibid.

74 In Snouck Hurgronje's later formulation of a policy of Association, detailed in his 1911 lectures published as "Nederland en de Islam", he envisaged a "top-down" process of reform in which a westernised Javanese elite was to be co-opted to introduce colonial reforms aimed at modernising Java in partnership with the colonial bureaucracy.

75 Kartini to Nellie van Zuylen-Tromp, November 1902. Nellie was President of *Oost en West*.

– should be given the right to participate in and guide that task.[76] It was the underlying principle upon which her feminist and proto-nationalist views were based.

The air of *nobless oblige* aside, the above quotation nevertheless clearly reflects Kartini's appreciation of a "modern" approach to ethnography. In contrast to earlier, nineteenth-century ethnographic practice that focused on collecting objects or details, the influence of anthropological theory now emphasised the need to understand "a way of life" (and to carry out field work). It became the role of the camera-assisted researcher, as a participant-observer, to help record this and so to contribute to an understanding of a society.[77] It was this approach that Kartini repeatedly emphasised in her correspondence when reiterating her aim of "recording in word and picture [things] which would be able to give the European a clearer impression of us Javanese".

Conclusion

Historians have long emphasised only one aspect of Kartini's engagement with the West, her writing, and the tendency has been to interpret this in terms of her acceptance of a Western discourse on modernity. This chapter suggests that Kartini used her writing to present a new image of "her" Java and in realising this aim came to see the camera as an important tool. She expressed herself through the limited means then available to Javanese – and more particularly to Javanese women – primarily through a private women's network and in writing characterised by strong visual imagery. As she ventured into the public world dominated by Europeans, males and modern technologies, she turned increasingly to the medium of photography. Kartini was as adept at subverting and appropriating the established social and colonial functions of the camera as she was with her writing. Within the means available to her, she employed the photographic image to support her broader agenda: to quite literally present a picture of her own life and of contemporary Java to convince Europeans of the entitlement of Javanese to modernity. If, for the early-twentieth-century advocates of an Ethical Policy, the photograph and the camera were used to reveal "the work that had yet to be done", for Kartini the photograph

76 This was the theme of the speech her brother gave to the Dutch-language society in Ghent in 1899: see Coté, *On Feminism and Nationalism*, Appendix Four.

77 *Toekang Potret*, 31-47.

provided a further platform for her claim to Javanese agency in constructing the path towards Javanese autonomy.

It would be a misreading to conceive of Kartini's thoughts about the camera as acts of imitation, of being "like a European". Rather than representing attempts to disguise her Javaneseness, her appropriation of metropolitan European ideas, values and technologies was an assertion of a newfound confidence in a Javanese cultural identity. It was, as Kartini made perfectly clear in her correspondence, no longer the feudal Java of the past as, she mockingly noted, Snouck Hurgronje, the much-respected expert on Islam, may have believed it to be. The years 1898-1904 represented the very beginning of the era of modern colonialism and of the articulation of a Javanese (not yet an Indonesian) national consciousness. As Kartini's correspondence suggests, at this time only a few individuals within either context as yet recognised, let alone managed to articulate, what the future might encompass. It was in this historical moment that Kartini attempted to reshape the European imaginary in which the Javanese were imprisoned.

Even amongst Kartini's small group of sympathetic friends in the colony – including the "prophet" of the Ethical Policy, Conrad van Deventer, who only "discovered" Kartini after the publication of her letters almost a decade later[78] – there was little desire to support the (not so radical) recommendations made on Kartini's behalf by her most influential supporter, the Dutch Socialist leader, Henri van Kol. There was even less likelihood that any new vision of colonialism would include a recognition of the aspirations beginning to be articulated by this new generation of Javanese. And indeed, there was as yet little support for it in the "real" Java from which Kartini knew she had to keep secret her most deeply held aims – the abolition of polygamy and child marriage.

How then do we interpret Kartini and the image of Java of which she tried but in the end failed to convince Europeans? Hers was not an attempt to disguise her "Indonesianness", as Jean Taylor suggests with reference to a later generation of Javanese nationalists,[79] but rather to remove an entrenched, nineteenth-century colonial image of Java, to clear away the layers of colonialist assumptions about "the native" in an attempt to reshape European attitudes towards the Javanese. To do so she employed the contemporary political, cultural, academic and social discourses of

78 Conrad van Deventer, "Kartini," (August 1911), in: H.T. Colenbrander and J.E. Stokvis, ed., *Leven en Arbeid van Mr C.Th. van Deventer* (Amsterdam: P.N. van Kampen & Zoon, 1917), 310-335. The article was in support of the Dutch project to establish a Kartini School.

79 Taylor, "Costume and gender."

those elements of European society that were beginning to gain attention in colonial and metropolitan circles and which seemed to suggest that there, at last, would be a sympathetic ear. In thinking about how she would use a camera, Kartini had discovered another possibility – one that augmented her writing – for communicating meaningfully across the colonial divide.

Postscript

Since the finalisation of this collection quite miraculously it seems three previously unavailable new sources of evidence for considering the importance of photography and the camera in the life of R.A. Kartini have been brought to my attention. The private owners of this material have allowed me to view and copy their prized possessions as a contribution to furthering an understanding of this important Indonesian figure. The three sources are: Kartini's photograph album, discovered (or perhaps re-discovered) only recently in a drawer of an old cupboard in the Kartini museum at Rembang, Java; a large collection of family photographs and documents in the possession of a granddaughter of one of Kartini's sisters, also in Java; and a collection of previously unpublished correspondence by Kartini's sisters in the Netherlands in which the importance of the exchange of portrait photographs between friends is again highlighted.

The discovery of Kartini's photo album confirms the existence of this important document regularly mentioned in her correspondence. Despite the fact that, unfortunately, many of the portrait photos have been torn out, its remaining contents strengthen my contention that Kartini was in contact with a wide circle of Javanese correspondents and acquaintances. While I have been unable as yet to determine the identity of the remaining portraits of individuals represented in this collection, the album clearly reinforces how fashionable collecting photographs of acquaintances was amongst this class of Javanese. Also, as argued in this chapter, it points to the way the photograph served as a tactile presence to represent the friend separated by distance that, at this point in time for women like Kartini, could only rarely be bridged.

The collection of family photographs in the possession of an immediate descendent, evidently saved as valued memories and added to throughout the century, demonstrates another aspect of the role of the private photograph as sustaining a sense of family identity in novel ways. Having the privilege of sighting this family collection in situ – in the ancestral home – reinforced a sense of the photograph as something personal that can be lost when viewing historic photographs in public archives.

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7 Modelling modernity

Ethnic Chinese photography in the ethical era

Karen Strassler

Contoh (models) of modernity in the ethical era

An illustration in John Pemberton's *On the Subject of "Java"* shows a mail order catalogue from 1928 in which the ethnic Chinese owner of the business is pictured modelling, on front and back cover respectively, the ready-made "Javanese" and "Dutch"-style clothes he markets to Javanese aristocrats.[1] Despite the different costumes, the two photographs appear as mirror images – the same background but reversed, the figure facing in opposing directions – as if a single negative had been flipped. Pemberton's argument concerns the emergence of the subject of "Java" in the age of mechanical reproduction: a replicable figure available for identification and exemplified in the ready-made costume. What drops out of Pemberton's fine account, however, is the ethnic Chinese merchant who lends his body to model the signs of *both* the "traditional" Javanese and the modern "progressive" (*madjoe*).

Viewed through a different lens, the catalogue images speak eloquently to the role of ethnic Chinese as figures who "modelled" modernity via photography in the late-colonial Indies. If photography provided an ideal technological apparatus by which both "modern progress" and "Javanese tradition" could be imagined as trappings one might take on and off – a matter of fashion – the figure of the ethnic Chinese stands as a crucial broker of these new modern possibilities. As I will argue in this essay, ethnic Chinese photographers and photographic practices provided "*contoh*" (examples or models) of ways of seeing and displaying modern subjects, sociality and domestic life that became available for emulation and adaptation by subjects of the Indies more widely. Their position as mediators of modernity troubled dominant narratives in which Europeans presented themselves as the sole bearers of modernity. Indeed, ethnic Chinese modelled an alternative modernity that was not Dutch – powerfully suggesting through their

1 The catalogue was from Sidho-Madjoe (Succeed-Progress), a clothing retailer based in Surakarta; Tjan Tjoe Twan was the proprietor. John Pemberton, *On the Subject of "Java"* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 133.

example that modernity belonged to no single group and was available to all. Ironically, however, their own alterity as an ethnic minority could undermine that message of universality.

The Ethical Policy initiated by the Dutch colonial regime in 1901 helped usher in an era Takashi Shiraishi aptly termed an "age in motion".[2] Among Indies elites, discourses of enlightenment and modernity gained new currency; technology and progress were heralded, and change seemed inevitable. This was no less true for the ethnic Chinese of Java, for whom "the Ethical years brought revolutionary changes".[3] As Didi Kwartanada argues, the pressure to become modern that was felt across racial boundaries during this period was exacerbated, for the ethnic Chinese, by a desire to demonstrate their "civilized status" in the face of prejudice and negative stereotypes.[4] Indeed, the ethical era was marked by rising anti-Sinicism among both the Dutch and the indigenous population, as the colonial regime positioned itself as protectors of the "natives" from the exploitative practices of the Chinese.[5]

For the upper echelons of *peranakan* (mestizo) Chinese society in the Indies, the end of the tax and opium revenue farming system by which they had secured their status and wealth in the nineteenth century unravelled an entire social and economic order. One result of the erosion of old structures of power was a self-conscious embrace, among some *peranakan* elites, of modernity. As early as the 1880s, some elite *peranakan* began providing their children with "Western" educations; in the early decades of the twentieth century these younger generations increasingly turned to white-collar, "Western" professions and more modern, capitalist business activities.[6] Yet even as the "enlightened" Chinese pursued Western-style modernity, they also developed renewed interest in Chinese cultural heritage, particularly

2 Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912-1926* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

3 James R. Rush, *Opium to Java: Revenue Farming and Chinese Enterprise in Colonial Indonesia 1860-1910* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 242. For a useful overview of this period, see G. William Skinner, "Creolized Chinese societies in Southeast Asia," in *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese,* ed. Anthony Reid, first published 1996 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 51-93.

4 Didi Kwartanada, "The Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan School: A transborder project of modernity in Batavia, c. 1900s," in *Chinese Indonesians Reassessed: History, Religion, and Belonging,* ed. Siew-Min Sai and Chang-Yau Hoon (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 27-44 at 29.

5 Rush, "Opium to Java," 242.

6 Ibid., 245-248.

Confucianism. As Kwartanada puts it, they sought to be "equal [to Europeans] in modernity but separate as Chinese".[7]

As the power of the old *peranakan* elite networks waned, the *totok* (full-blooded and China-oriented) Chinese, who emigrated to the Indies in great numbers between 1860 and 1930, increasingly rivalled them for economic power and leadership of the Indies Chinese community.[8] The newly arriving *totok* encouraged positive assertions of Chinese identity, brought with them modern practices, skills and ideas, and together with progressive *peranakan* established modern Chinese associations and schools. The 1911 revolution in China would have a great impact on the ethnic Chinese community in the Indies; the cutting off of the "traditional" Manchu pigtail, which became a politically charged gesture in the first decade of the twentieth century, was a visible sign of widespread enthusiasm for new political ideals and of rejection of the constraining traditions enlightened Chinese viewed as incompatible with their modern orientations.[9] For many "natives" as well as ethnic Chinese, the revolution in China provided a model by which it became possible to imagine the end of colonial rule and the birth of an Indonesian nation.[10]

7 Kwartanada, "The 'Enlightened Chinese' and the making of Modernity in Java, c. 1890-1911," unpublished manuscript, 6.

8 Between 1900 and 1930, approximately 300,000 people left southern China for parts of Southeast Asia: see James Mackie, "Introduction," in *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese*, ed. Anthony Reid (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), xii-xxx at xix. Although the Dutch colonial state treated all ethnic Chinese as "Foreign Orientals", there was a significant social divide between *totok* and *peranakan* (between those newer immigrants who tended not to intermarry, who maintained a strong Chinese identity, and who tended to be of Hakka and Cantonese origin, and those who had been in the Indies for many generations, were of Hokkien descent, had intermarried with local women, and had developed a distinctive mestizo culture). On *totok* versus *peranakan*, see Leo Suryadinata, *Pribumi Indonesians, the Chinese Minority, and China,* 3rd ed. (Singapore: Heinemann Asia, 1992). Nevertheless, the rise of pan-Chinese nationalism and the treatment of the ethnic Chinese as a single group by the state tended to diminish differences between these communities in the last decades of the colonial era: see Lea E. Williams, *Overseas Chinese Nationalism: The Genesis of the Pan-Chinese Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1916* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1960).

9 Kwartanada, "The 'Enlightened Chinese'", 186-190.

10 James Mackie writes that in the early years of the twentieth century "nationalism, both Chinese and indigenous, began to redefine the political agenda. Chinese schools, newspapers, and reading clubs contributed to the dissemination of the radical and anti-colonial ideas of the Kuomintang and to a stronger sense of solidarity as Chinese rather than as members of a particular speech-group – Hokkien, Teochiu, Hakka or Cantonese": Mackie, "Introduction," xx-xxi. On the contributions of "revolutionary Chinese cosmopolitanism" to Southeast Asian nationalist movements, see Pheng Cheah, *Inhuman Conditions: On Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 2007), Chapter 4. It is important to note,

As I have argued elsewhere, ethnic Chinese were in certain ways ideally poised to embody an emerging ideal of modern subjectivity.[11] As a transnational minority, the ethnic Chinese were particularly sensitive to, in Siegel's phrase, the "currents of world communications".[12] Spread throughout the archipelago, they remained ungrounded in any of its imagined primordial communities, exemplifying the unrooted and mobile nature of modern identities. And many ethnic Chinese spoke Malay, the *lingua franca* that would become the basis for the national language, as their primary language. As a diasporic community that often maintained cultural, economic and linguistic ties to Chinese in other parts of Asia, moreover, ethnic Chinese in the Indies often served as brokers of the global capitalist modernity that had already taken hold in pan-Asian centres such as Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai.[13]

It is the role of Chinese in the Indies as mediators – and exemplars – of modernity that I wish to explore in this essay. There were many arenas in which ethnic Chinese provided models of what modernity would look and feel like. Indeed, the 1928 catalogue in Pemberton's text gestures to the crucial role of ethnic Chinese merchants, who introduced and, as in that case, literally modelled fashions and goods associated with modern appearances and ways of being. Affluent ethnic Chinese were also highly visible *consumers* of modern goods and fashions. And, as other scholars have noted, ethnic Chinese played key roles in the development of Malay-language literature, theatre and the press, as well as film and cinema houses.[14]

however, that even as Chinese nationalism provided a model for Indonesian nationalism, the fact that Chinese nationalism was being asserted among Chinese in the Indies at the same time that an Indonesian national identity was emerging reinforced the positioning of "Chinese" as "one of the most important 'others'" against which new nationalist identities were posed": Anthony Reid, "Entrepreneurial minorities, nationalism and the state," in *Essential Outsiders: Chinese and Jews in the Modern Transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe*, ed. Daniel Chirot and Anthony Reid (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 33-71 at 55.

11 See Karen Strassler, "Cosmopolitan visions: Ethnic Chinese and the photographic imagining of Indonesia in the late colonial and early postcolonial periods," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 67:2 (2008): 395-432.

12 James T. Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 93.

13 Anthony Reid notes that "because they were relatively urban, uprooted, educated, and commerical, entrepreneurial minorities tended to feel all these currents earlier and more strongly than the majority communities. They contributed more than their share to the early stages of forging new socialist and nationalist identities": Reid, "Entrepreneurial minorities," 51.

14 On Chinese contributions to Malay literature and the press, see Claudine Salmon, *Le Moment "Sino-Malais" de la Literature Indonesianne* (Paris: Cahiers d'Archipel, 1992); Leo

In this essay my focus will be on photography – a technology that was itself emblematic of global modernity. In the first decades of the twentieth century, photography became an integral part of a modern lifestyle pursued by Indies elites, including Europeans and Eurasians, ethnic Chinese, and wealthy and aristocratic "natives". That ethnic Chinese in the Indies embraced photography with more alacrity than indigenous inhabitants of the Indies was often suggested to me anecdotally during my research, although it is difficult to substantiate this claim. We do know that ethnic Chinese far outnumbered "native" professional and amateur photographers in the late-colonial period and well into the postcolonial era.[15] Tracing the history of domestic photography is less easy to do, but it is fair to say that relative wealth, integration into capitalist culture and cosmopolitan orientations tended to make the ethnic Chinese more receptive to global, modern practices such as photography than all but the most westernised, elite "natives". My own research on photography in Indonesia has focused on the postcolonial period and on Java, and far more research remains to be done on colonial-era photography among the ethnic Chinese.

This essay is intended, then, as provisional findings in an area that has thus far received little attention, for which the analytic of the "*contoh*" may prove fruitful. By highlighting the status of the photograph as an example,

Suryadinata, "The pre-World War II peranakan Chinese press of Java: A preliminary survey," Southeast Asia Paper no. 18 (Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1971); Reid, "Entrepreneurial minorities"; Ahmat Adam, *The Vernacular Press and the Emergence of Modern Indonesian Consciousness (1855-1913)* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1995). On Chinese translations into Malay, see Didi Kwartanada, "Translations in Romanized Malay and the revival of Chineseness among the Peranakan in Java (1880s-1911)," in *Translation in Asia: Theories, Practices, Histories*, ed. Jan van der Putten and Ronit Ricci (Manchester: St Jerome Press, 2011), 119-135. On popular theatre, see Matthew Isaac Cohen, *The Komedie Stamboel: Popular Theater in Colonial Indonesia, 1891-1903* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006). On ethnic Chinese and the history of film in Indonesia, see Charlotte Setijadi-Dunne and Thomas Barker, "Imagining 'Indonesia': Ethnic Chinese film producers in pre-independence cinema," *Rumah Film*, 14 March 2012: 1-18, accessed 16 June 2012, http://new.rumahfilm.org. On ethnic Chinese family films, see Peter Post, "The Kwee home movies: A new resource for the study of the life of the peranakan elite in colonial Java," *Chinese Heritage Center Bulletin* 4 (December 2004): 6-9.

15 Kassian Cephas notwithstanding, there were extremely few "native" professional photographers until after independence. Studio photography was not, for the most part, an elite profession. Amateur photography was a higher status activity (as a hobby it reflected its members' cultured sensibility, expendable income and leisure time, and technological savvy), as is reflected not only in the greater numbers of native elites who took part in amateur photography but also internally within the ethnic Chinese community. Whereas both wealthy *peranakan* and *totok* Chinese took up amateur photography, the majority of studio photographers were non-elite *totok* Cantonese immigrants.

I want to stress the modular nature of photographic representations. I mean this in two senses: first, photographic conventions were readily disseminated across ethnic, national and other social boundaries. The ease of photographic transmission unmoored these signs from any fixed origin, enabling them to be appropriated, quoted and recycled. Second, I want to examine in more specific terms the particular ways that ethnic Chinese photographs functioned as performative statements rather than documentary records. When people pose within a photograph they may pose new possibilities for themselves, but they also present these possibilities for those who may view the image and imagine themselves in its frame. Let us turn first to ethnic Chinese studio photographers who literally provided "*contoh*" images for people yearning to see themselves as modern.

Ethnic Chinese studio photographers: Modelling cosmopolitan modernity

Just as the Chinese merchant drops out of the picture of Pemberton's account, so studies of photography in the colonial period have largely overlooked the role of ethnic Chinese photographers.[16] Although the presence of Japanese, Chinese and Armenian photographers was acknowledged in the landmark volume, *Toekang Potret: 100 Years of Photography in the Dutch Indies 1839-1939*, the basic assumption that photography was spread by Europeans to the indigenous populations of the Indies has remained intact.[17] Studies of colonial photography in Java have focused on illustrious European photographers, such as Woodbury and Page and Isidore van Kinsbergen, and celebrate the earliest known native photographer, Kassian Cephas, who not only had a commercial studio, but starting in 1871 also served as official photographer to the Sultan of Yogyakarta.[18] We know little, however, about Cephas' relationship with Tan Bie Ie, a *peranakan* publisher and a

16 For a more in-depth discussion of lacunae in historical scholarship on the ethnic Chinese in the late-colonial and postcolonial periods, see Strassler, "Cosmopolitan visions."

17 Anneke Groeneveld et al. *Toekang Potret: 100 Years of Photography in the Dutch Indies 1839-1939* (Amsterdam and Rotterdam: Fragment Uitgeverij/Museum voor Volkenkunde, 1989).

18 Ibid.; Jane Levy Reed, ed., *Toward Independence: A Century of Indonesia Photographed* (San Francisco: The Friends of Photography, 1991); Steven Wachlin, Marianne Fluitsma and G.J. Knaap, *Woodbury and Page: Photographers Java* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1994); Gerda Teuns-de Boer, Saskia Asser and Steven Wachlin, *Isidore van Kinsbergen: Pioneer Photographer and Theatre Maker in the Dutch East Indies* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2010); Gerrit Knaap, *Kassian Cephas: Photography in the Service of the Sultan.* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1999).

photographer in his own right who printed some of Cephas' photographs as postcards.[19]

Whether an example of collaboration or piracy, the circulation of Cephas' photographs by an ethnic Chinese photographer and publisher reminds us that photography – like modernity – did not travel from Europe to the Indies in a simple linear fashion; ethnic Chinese played a key role in its dissemination and development. Ethnic Chinese studio photographers were a significant presence by the turn of the century.[20] Chinese-owned studios probably outnumbered those owned by Europeans in smaller, provincial towns and cities in the last decades of the colonial period. Echoing the social hierarchy of the Indies, only the highest echelons of society could afford to be photographed at a European studio. Less well-off indigenous elites, Dutch, Eurasians and ethnic Chinese – especially those living in more remote areas – most likely had their first portrait taken in the studio of a Chinese *toekang potret* (portrait-maker) or by an ethnic Chinese itinerant photographer. After the exodus of Japanese and European photographers in the aftermath of World War II and independence, it was these ethnic Chinese studio photographers who brought photography into the postcolonial period. In Indonesia photography's status as a "Western" technology has therefore been complicated by the fact that it often bore a Chinese face.

The pioneering ethnic Chinese who founded studios in the Indies in the first decades of the twentieth century were mostly of Cantonese origin. Many had apprenticed for a number of years in Singapore before travelling to the Indies and opening their own studios. Once firmly established, the photographer would invite siblings, cousins or fellow villagers from China to come and help out. Children almost always worked in the studios of their parents, and would either take over their parents' studio or found new ones as they reached adulthood. In this way, familial networks of Cantonese studio photographers extended throughout Java and the other islands of the Indies; this pattern of familial networks of photography studios apparently reached across Southeast Asia.[21]

Many studio photographers retained familial, linguistic and commercial ties to a pan-Chinese world centred around the cosmopolitan cities of Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai. The son of a former employee of

19 See Didi Kwartanada, "Tionghwa-Java: A peranakan family history from the Javanese Principalities," *Chinese Heritage Centre Bulletin* 4 (December 2004): 40-44 at 41.

20 This history is discussed in more detail in Strassler, *Refracted Visions*, Chapter Two.

21 See Gretchen Liu, *From the Family Album: Portraits from the Lee Brothers Studio, Singapore 1910-1925* (Singapore: Landmark Books, 1995).

Liek Kong, a studio in Yogyakarta, recalled, for example, that his father was sent to Shanghai in the late 1930s to learn a technique for printing photographs onto porcelain plates and cloths.[22] Actual travel between the Indies and China was relatively rare, however, and the links between Indies studios and the wider pan-Chinese world often took the form of print media (magazines, catalogues etc.) and imported equipment and supplies. In some cases, cosmopolitan ties were mobilised as part of a photographer's caché. Lie Yap King, the founder of Djawa ("Java") studio in Semarang (established in 1928), had apprenticed for many years in Singapore before coming to the Indies. His studio featured elegant props (such as toy animals and a rocking horse used for children's portraits) and painted backdrops imported from Shanghai, some of which remained in the studio when I visited in 1999. And the founder's son recalled that the walls were hung with portraits his father had taken in Singapore of Chinese opera stars and wealthy Singaporeans.[23] The photographs showcased his consummate skill and cosmopolitanism, and the (Chinese) figures within the photographs provided glamourous models that his patrons might emulate.

Chung Hwa ("China"), a studio in Semarang that was founded in 1922 by Lie Yap King's brother, Lie Yie King, became a major importer and distributor of photographic equipment in the late 1920s.[24] Having apprenticed in Singapore, Lie Yie King was able to communicate in English with the British and German firms from whom he imported camera lenses, film, paper and other supplies, thereby becoming a strong competitor to the Dutch companies that had dominated the trade. Chung Hwa also imported materials from Shanghai, including painted backdrops and photo frames. A Chung Hwa catalogue from the late 1930s exemplifies the cosmopolitan world of late-colonial photography with the mix of Dutch, Malay, English and Chinese languages on its pages. A page from that catalogue advertises imported picture frames, but the advertisement markets what is inside the frames as well; not unlike the *contoh* photographs of Chinese opera stars and glamorous Singaporeans at Djawa Studio, it models modern style – a woman in coquettish pose, lipstick and bangs, and smiling men in suits and ties (figure 1).[25]

22 Interview, Yuwono, 28 September 1999, Yogyakarta.

23 Interview, Lie Tiong Dang, 2 September 1999, Semarang.

24 Interviews, Lukito Darsono, 1 and 2 September 1999, Semarang.

25 Suggestive of the limits of the *contoh*, smiles would remain infrequent in Indonesian portraiture.

Figure 1 Chung Hwa catalogue showing picture frames, c. late 1930s

Source: Collection of Didi Kwartanada and Family

Not all studio photographers could boast of images taken in Singapore, but it was customary for studio photographers to decorate their walls with *contoh* images. Like the merchant who modelled the costumes for his mail order business in the 1928 advertisement, studio photographers typically photographed themselves and their own families in various costumes and poses. These *contoh* images provided "object lessons" for their customers – ethnic Chinese, European and Eurasian, and "native" – in the appearances they might assume within their own studio portraits. Recalling her childhood, the daughter of the founder of a studio that operated in Yogyakarta from 1925 until the mid-1980s recalled, "Every time we had a new background, members of the family would pose as models. Then it would be enlarged and hung up so that customers could see it as an example." This practice persists to this day: on the walls of photo studios all over Java, Chinese-Indonesian studio photographers continue to photograph themselves and their families in a range of poses and costumes, from traditional Javanese wedding costumes to modern, "international style" white wedding dresses, modelling a range of possible appearances for their customers. *Contoh* images serve simultaneously as advertisements

for the photographer's skill, as instruction in the latest trends and fashions, and as catalogues of the varied appearances available for the customer's choosing. In this sense they are public images, intended for public display and consumption, even as they provide models for personal photographs often intended only for familial circulation and domestic display.

Fashion and self-fashioning

The 1928 mail order catalogue gestures to the crucial roles of both fashion and photography to practices of self-fashioning by which people took on "modern" appearances in ethical-era Java. "Fashion" has been central to accounts of modern experience, epitomising a temporality of novelty and transience, the rapid obsolescence of capitalist commodities, as well as new possibilities for and imperatives of self-invention.[26] Clothing was an especially loaded signifier in the Indies. Indeed, that an ethnic Chinese merchant would appear in both "Western" and "Javanese" dress was itself a sign of modern times, for sumptuary laws requiring people to dress according to the ethnic community to which they belonged remained in effect (though often violated) until the late nineteenth century.[27] Not surprisingly, fashion has figured prominently in accounts of the self-conscious "awakening" that occurred among native elites and ethnic Chinese in the late-colonial Indies.[28] Photography and fashion worked together, for not only did photography work to circulate fashion, both contributed to the unmooring of appearances from fixed identities and became key technologies in the practices of self-fashioning so integral to modern subjectivity.

Sumptuary laws were premised on the idea that external signs could be made to reliably index racial identities, thereby buttressing colonial hierarchies, but fashion proved subversive in this regard. As Pemberton argues, Javanese aristocrats' emerging discourse on "Javanese culture" entailed the formulation of a "*Cara Jawa*" (Javanese way/style) that could stand in contradistinction to a "*Cara Walandi*" (Dutch way/style). Precisely

26 On Benjamin's work on fashion and modernity, inspired in part by his readings of Baudelaire, see Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991).

27 An 1872 sumptuary law made it illegal for anyone in the Indies "to appear in public attired in any manner other than that of one's ethnic group": Rush, *Opium to Java*, 14; also 91. Sumptuary laws had existed in the Indies since the seventeenth century.

28 See especially the contributions in Henk Schulte Nordholt, ed., *Outward Appearances: Dressing State and Society in Indonesia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1997).

because Javanese and Dutch difference was figured as a matter of style, elite Javanese could engage in forms of "cultural drag" that flew in the face of Dutch attempts to control racial and cultural "translation".[29] Jean Gelman Taylor describes a hybridisation of styles in both dress and decor embraced by aristocratic Javanese that likewise confused the racial boundaries that Dutch colonisers were eager to draw. In late-colonial studio portraits of Javanese aristocrats, she suggests, the combination of European settings and Javanese clothing attempted to convey the harmonious coexistence of (Javanese) "tradition" and (European) "modernity".[30]

More radically, James T. Siegel proposes that when "natives" began to adopt the Western (modern) "fashions" of the time, they were not trying to look like Dutchmen but "taking on forms thought to belong … to the world in general".[31] As Javanese opened themselves to the world via print media and photography, fashion took on the character of a *lingua franca*, a set of signs that, because they belonged to no one, could be appropriated by anyone. Consistent with this argument, Rudolf Mrázek traces the figure of the late-colonial "dandy" for whom the external signs of fashion marked a cosmopolitan, modern subjectivity: "The newly born native dandy was a 'native' who borrowed Dutch clothes to place himself in a 'modern' society."[32] These trends were not limited to the Javanese, but applied also to other indigenous groups in the Indies, as "dressing in a European way came to be an indication that one fostered progressive ideas" across a broad social spectrum.[33]

Ethnic Chinese dandies also self-consciously performed their modernity through dress; appearing in modern clothes served as a "double edged

29 Pemberton, *On the Subject of "Java,"* 58. Several Solonese princes, for example, liked to dress in both Dutch and Javanese costume, to the great dismay of the Dutch (58, 67). The mixing of elements from Javanese, Dutch and Chinese clothing styles began well before the period traced in Pemberton: see Kees van Dijk, "Sarongs, jubbahs, and trousers: Appearance as a means of distinction and discrimination," in *Outward Appearances: Dressing State and Society in Indonesia*, ed. Henk Schulte Nordholt (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1997), 39-83.

30 Jean Gelman Taylor, "Costume and gender in colonial Java, 1800-1940," in *Outward Appearances: Dressing State and Society in Indonesia*, ed. Henk Schulte Nordholt (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1997), 85-116; see also Van Dijk, "Sarongs, jubbahs, and trousers," 51-52.

31 Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution*, 9.

32 Rudolf Mrázek, "Indonesian dandy: The politics of clothes in the late colonial period, 1893-1942," in *Outward Appearances: Dressing State and Society in Indonesia*, ed. Henk Schulte Nordholt (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1997), 117-150 at 131-132. The clear demarcation of "Dutch" and "native" spheres in Dutch photographs of this time, suggests Mrázek, was a reaction to this encroaching figure of hybrid fashion. See also Rudolf Mrázek, *Engineers of Happy Land* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 143-144.

33 Van Dijk, "Sarongs, jubbahs, and trousers," 59.

rebellion against [Chinese] conservatism and colonial law".[34] This embrace of Western dress and style among *peranakan* elites had begun even before sumptuary laws were formally relaxed and the 1911 revolution in China prompted ethnic Chinese to cut off their queues.[35] Already by the turn of the century, James R. Rush reports, "Chinese youths in the cities evidently defied the [sumptuary] statutes to don Western dress and yearned to be rid of their braids and other signs of backwardness."[36] Ethnic Chinese youths expressed their "self-conscious modernity" by emulating "Western" clothing and leisure activities.[37] Photographs of dapper ethnic Chinese dandies feature jauntily worn European-style hats, watch fobs, Western-style jackets and leather shoes (figure 2).[38]

Not only clothing, of course, but the objects with which people surrounded themselves in photographs taken both at the studio and at home served as semiotically charged adornments crucial to their self-fashioning as modern subjects. Bicycles, phonographs, cars and even sewing machines signalled access to modern technology, an access doubly signified in the photograph itself. Tricycles, dolls and other toys in children's portraits gave visual form to both parental love and an ideal childhood of play and plenty. One of the more common objects in late-colonial portraits was books, which appear especially in the hands of youth and children, indexing modern learning and all the future access to wealth and position that implied.[39] These images both reflected and promoted new dreams and possibilities; they served, in effect, as advertisements for modernity, redolent with the pleasures of anticipation.

It was not only in its semiotics (the arrangement of signs within the photographic frame) that photography played an integral role in late-colonial

34 Kwartanada, "The 'Enlightened Chinese'", 186; Van Dijk, "Sarongs, jubbahs, and trousers," 58.

35 Williams, *Overseas Chinese Nationalism*, 40. Kwartanada dates the earliest roots of Chinese dandyism to the 1850s, though the practice of wearing Western clothes did not become widespread until the 1890s: Kwartanada, "The 'Enlightened Chinese'", 181-183.

36 Rush, *Opium to Java*, 245; see also Van Dijk, "Sarongs, jubbahs, and trousers," 58.

37 Rush, *Opium to Java*, 254.

38 On the watch fob as a symbol of modern temporality, work and merit, see Taylor, "Costume and gender," 100. As with the ethnic Javanese, the Chinese dandy was almost exclusively a male phenomenon. Although full comparison is beyond the scope of this paper, it does seem that women appeared in modern fashions (especially young women and girls) more frequently in portraits of ethnic Chinese than of "natives", where women more often bore the signs of "tradition", In both cases, however, younger women and girls were often dressed in modern, Western-style clothing.

39 See for example, KITLV Image Collection, Image 29189 of two ethnic Chinese youths, one of whom holds a book: Charles & Van Es & Co., Batavia, c. 1900.

Figure 2 Photographer unknown, Chinese Dandies in Yogyakarta (the man on the left is Tan Gwat Bing, in the middle is his older brother Tan Bie Ie, and the third man is unidentified), c. 1905

Source: Collection of Didi Kwartanada and Family

performances of modernity. Pragmatically, the making, exchange and display of photographic images clearly marked practitioners as moderns. Like other technological hobbies, the practice of amateur photography helped forge a ra-

cially mixed elite society that transcended the ethnic and racial distinctions of the colonial regime in the name of "modernity".[40] Members of amateur photography clubs, which formed in the Indies in the mid-1920s, were bonded together by a shared orientalising gaze at the "traditional" and picturesque beautiful Indies (*mooi Indië*) and by their common mastery of photographic technology. In both its paternalism towards the majority "native" population and its embrace of technology, amateur photography echoed (and gave visual form to) the dominant discourses of the ethical colonial state.

But it was also via an admiring and mirroring gaze *at each other* that Indies elites affirmed their common modernity. Portraits passed hands as tokens of sentiment that cemented alliances among an emerging late-colonial elite society. Peter Post has noted that wealthy *peranakan* and the central Javanese royalty, who shared a common fascination with photography, often exchanged photographic portraits.[41] That photographs were used to establish and maintain social bonds is also evidenced by the frequency with which images were signed by their subjects; hand-written salutations, inscribed in ink onto the image or along its margins, added to the intimacy of the exchange. A number of debonaire portraits of men in white suits from the 1930s, embellished with English inscriptions such as "Sincerely yours" or "Yours truly" followed by signatures and dates, can be found in the albums of the ultra-wealthy Oei family of Java as well as in those of less elite ethnic Chinese.[42] This sharing of "modern" appearances worked, at least to some degree, to counterbalance the growing segmentation among social groups that took place in the last decades of colonial rule.[43]

Advertising modernity

If, as I am suggesting, personal images served in a sense as "advertisements" for modernity, they were also themselves often modelled on images circulat-

40 For a more in-depth discussion of amateur photography see Strassler, *Refracted Visions*, Chapter One. On amateur radio and other late-colonial technological hobbies, see Mrázek, *Engineers of Happy Land*.

41 Peter Post, "Java's Capitan Cina and Javanese royal families: Status, modernity, and power. Major-titular Be Kwat Koen and Mangkunegoro VII: Some observations," *Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies* 13 (October 2009): 49-66.

42 See for example, KITLV Image Collection, Image 50544 of an ethnic Chinese man from the Oei family album, 1936, signed "Yours Truly, [signature illegible]."

43 On segmentation among groups in the late-colonial Indies, see Jacobus van Doorn, *A Divided Society: Segmentation and Mediation in Late-Colonial Indonesia* (Rotterdam: Faculty of Social Sciences, Erasmus University Rotterdam, 1983).

ing in the public sphere, including advertisements, which "began to appear in newspapers and journals in the Netherlands Indies at the end of the nineteenth century, from the very moment printing presses began their victorious march".[44] As Henk Schulte Nordholt argues in his contribution to this volume (Chapter Eight), advertising images incited desire for new modern lifestyles among the indigenous middle class of the Indies. Henk Maier's sensitive reading of an advertisement for Philips lightbulbs from the periodical *Pandji Poestaka* in 1940 similarly reveals how much a single picture could paint a vivid, if subtly ambivalent, picture of modernity. In this drawing, which shows a (literally) enlightened Javanese family gathered around a table, under a lamp, at home, the child holds a book, the mother, embroidery, the father a newspaper. That the newspaper would figure so prominently in such an ad is not surprising given its status as an "icon of modernity",[45] a medium of "world communication" and of course a vehicle for advertising itself. Indeed, in a classic example of the recursive reflexivity of print media's address to a public that recognises itself by virtue of being addressed, the image allows us to peek at the newspaper held in the man's hands.[46] Visible alongside the horizontal lines indicating text is a blank square within which we glean a lightly sketched image of a lightbulb – an ad, in other words, that echoes the very one we are reading.

Maier draws a strong contrast between a photograph's indexical realism and such a drawing's iconic idealism; the Philips advertisement, he says, depicts not "a real family, but … a dream family".[47] Yet this distinction may not be as stark as he suggests. Some genres of photographs – among them studio portraits and advertising photographs – do their ideological work precisely by marrying the indexical truth claims and verisimilitude of the photographic image to the selectivity and artful composition more characteristic of illustration. Such images construct a fantasy, or an ideal,

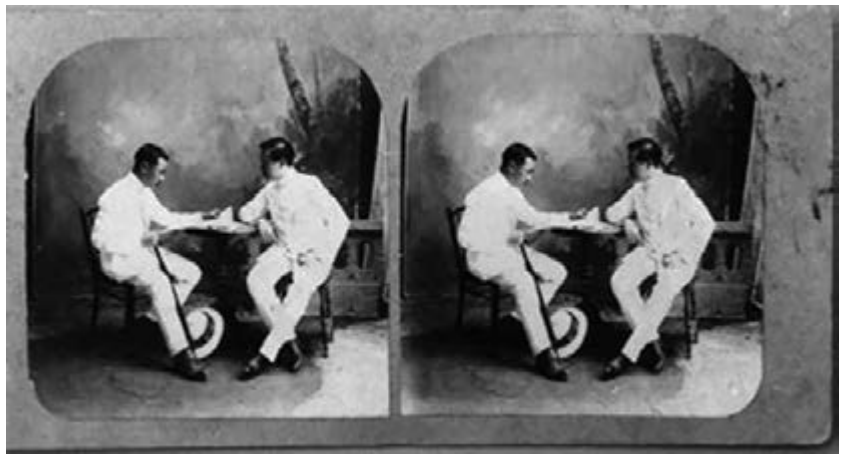
44 Henk Maier, "Maelstrom and electricity: Modernity in the Indies," in *Outward Appearances: Dressing State and Society in Indonesia*, ed. Henk Schulte Nordholt (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1997), 181-197 at 182.

45 Ibid., 193.

46 This advertisement is also discussed by Henk Schulte Nordholt and reproduced in figure 7 of his contribution to this volume. Anderson's insights about the power of the newspaper as a medium for national consciousness extended beyond its content to the ritual act of reading: reading one's newspaper, one became aware of the millions of unknown others engaged in that same act of reading: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991). The ad facilitates this awareness by reflexively mirroring the reader's own act of reading. On the mimicry propelled by encounters with advertising images in the print media, see Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution*, 88.

47 Maier, "Maelstrom and electricity," 188.

Figure 3 Photographer unknown, Tan Bie Ie and Tan Gwat Bing, c. 1915-1920



Source: Collection of Didi Kwartanada and Family

while using the media ideology of the camera-image to lend that ideal apparent facticity.

Let us look, for example, at a photograph in which the newspaper also makes an appearance as a central element in a carefully composed scene of modernity (figure 3). Tan Bie Ie, the photographer and publisher noted earlier, and his brother Tan Gwat Bing were members of the *peranakan* elite society of Yogyakarta, and both were avid photographers who frequently posed themselves in portraits. In one striking image – a stereoscopic photograph of the two brothers (likely composed in their own studio between 1915 and 1920) – they sit at a table, facing each other, as if unaware of the camera's presence. This conceit (which is unusual for the era) is, however, belied by the exquisite care with which the elements of the image are arranged – the suave and calm demeanour of the two men, the watch revealed on Tan Gwat Bing's wrist, the pressed pants and well-shined shoes, the umbrella propped against Tan Bie Ie's leg, the hat casually but deliberately placed on the floor against the table. At the centre of the photograph is a newspaper, which Tan Bie Ie appears to be reading: his head is inclined toward the page; Tan Gwat Bing also gazes down towards the paper, in an attitude of relaxed expectation, as if waiting to hear the day's news. It is an idealised image of the cosmopolitan ethnic Chinese of the Indies, modelling for themselves and all who might see them what cultivated modernity looked like.

Domestic displays

The sophistication with which Tan Bie Ie and his brother posed themselves in the stereoscopic image suggests their easy familiarity with the camera. This comfortable but calculated self-presentation contrasts with an earlier photograph taken in 1905 in an unknown part of the Indies (the photographer and subjects are also unknown) (figure 4). As with the stereoscope image, the figures of this portrait are arranged around a table. But they appear ill-at-ease as they pose in front of a crude cloth backdrop in what appears to be a makeshift studio. Only the elder son, who looks to be a boy no more than twelve, wears "modern" clothes: he dons a modified Western-style jacket with watch fob and holds a Western-style hat. He stands in a dandified pose, with one leg bent and an arm resting casually on the table edge. The other family members wear "Chinese" clothes and face the camera stiffly. At the portrait's centre is an emblem of modern domesticity: a photograph album of a type that was popular in the late nineteenth century lies open on the table.

Perhaps the inclusion of the album gestures to deceased or distant family members, completing the family picture via their photographic proxies. But we cannot be certain that the album belongs to this family. Although I think it unlikely, given the rudimentary quality of the "studio" they pose within, it could have been a prop provided by the unknown photographer to complete a "good" family portrait. Whatever the status of the album, like the ad within the ad for lightbulbs, its placement within the image comments reflexively on the significance of photography as a familial practice, and suggests that the destiny of this portrait is to take its place within an ever-expanding family archive and as a prosthetic form of familial integration.[48] It situates photography at the very core of ethnic Chinese family life.

Such a portrait, however, cannot be said to reflect a specifically "Chinese" photography; numerous portraits of Europeans and Eurasians from the Indies, taken both in studios and at home (though sometimes by professional photographers), show family members posed with photographs or photograph albums. Susie Protschky has described the strikingly frequent appearance of tea sets in Indies photography as central to the evocation of cosy family life among European and, to some degree, native elites. So, too,

48 On photograph albums within photographs as signs of absent family members and attempts to reconstitute a fragmented family unit, see Geoffrey Batchen, *Forget Me Not: Photography and Remembrance* (New York and Amsterdam: Princeton Architectural Press and Van Gogh Museum, 2006).

Figure 4 Photographer unknown, Chinese family in the Indies, c. 1905

Source: KITLV Image Collection, Leiden, Image 91501

photographs and photo albums appeared frequently in family photographs as key signifiers of a pleasant and intimate family life.[49] In some of these photographs the family is formally posed next to portraits that have been carefully placed on a table or a pedestal, presumably to complete the family picture by including non-present members.[50] Other more casual images

49 Susie Protschky, "Tea cups, cameras, and family life: Picturing domesticity in elite European and Javanese family photographs from the Netherlands Indies, ca. 1900-1942," *History of Photography* 36:1 (2012): 44-65 at 50. On photographs and photograph albums within colonial family photographs, see 49. On the display of photographs in domestic interiors, see 49-51.

50 Memorial photographs in which people posed with photographs of deceased loved ones were common in late-nineteenth-century Europe and America: see Batchen, *Forget Me Not*, and Jay Ruby, *Secure the Shadow: Death and Photography in America* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005). In the Indies, however, many photographs showing people posing with photos do not appear to have been mourning images and more likely were attempts to reconstitute a geographically dispersed extended family. A photograph of a European/Eurasian family taken by Charles & Van Es & Co. c. 1910, for example, shows a large extended family posed outside their home with photographs arranged on a table at the far right side of the frame: KITLV Image Collection, Image 154243; see also KITLV Images 51056 and 13338.

show a photograph album open on a table; family members sometimes appear as if in the act of looking at a photograph or photograph album.[51] Photographs taken in both European and ethnic Chinese homes also often captured (whether intentionally or not) framed family photographs hanging on the walls. In the same manner as the hats, watch fobs, bicycles, books and phonographs with which ethnic Chinese and other elites adorned themselves in their portraits, photographs and photograph albums were elements in a broader iconographic repertoire of modernity that was, in the late-colonial Indies, "defined by Western – particularly Dutch – standards" but potentially available to all.[52]

If the portrait of the ethnic Chinese family posed around an open photo album appears to have been modelled upon European photographic conventions, in what way can it be said to be a *contoh*? In a model that is itself modelled upon – copies of copies that proliferate unendingly – are we not seeing the revolutionary potential of photographic reproducibility, not to mention the power of modernity itself, as embodied in the technological capacity for mass production and reproduction?[53] The humble and unpolished nature of the portrait suggests that, despite the overt message connoted by the photograph album in the picture, photography was in fact not (yet) deeply integrated into this family's domestic life, or at least was just beginning to be. The portrait placed this particular group of people into an iconic picture of a modern family; in the act of taking on this appearance they performatively enacted their modernity and, in the process, they also modelled for others a possible appearance to emulate.

That the logic of the *contoh* extended beyond the portrait studio became clear to me in the fall of 1999, as I was conducting research in the central Javanese city of Semarang. I had stopped into a dusty, cluttered antique store and was looking at some old photographs, among them a framed portrait of an ethnic Chinese youth that appeared to have been made around the turn of the century. The owner of the store, a Javanese man probably in his early sixties, remarked off-handedly, "My mother once said to me, 'Don't make your house like a Chinese person's [*orang Cina*], with photographs all

51 For photographs showing the family with what appears to be a photograph album (in some cases it is not clear if it is an album, an illustrated periodical or a book) see, for example, KITLV Image Collection, Images 86063 and 115538. In a photograph of a Dutch brother and sister taken in 1923 in Medan, the sister has a large photograph album open in her lap: KITLV Image Collection, Image 119060.

52 Protschky, "Tea cups, cameras, and family life," 46.

53 Walter Benjamin, "The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction," in *Illuminations*, transl. Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 217-251.

over the place.'" Indeed, as with Dutch homes, photographs were frequently displayed in ethnic Chinese homes and shops (which were often continuous with their residences). Whereas the images hung on the walls of photo studios were self-consciously made and displayed as exemplary images, these domestic "galleries" may have less intentionally but nevertheless potently provided object lessons for those who entered these spaces as domestic servants, workers, visitors and customers.

The woman's comment is striking, however, for the way it seeks to interrupt the operation of the *contoh*. In labelling a certain excessive photographic practice "Chinese", she seeks to police a firm boundary between "Chinese" and "native" (the term she uses to designate ethnic Chinese, "Cina", is derogatory). Yet the very fact that she offered this warning to her son suggests anxiety about the ease with which such differences might be eroded precisely through the flow of mimesis that seems to issue from the photograph. In many ways her admonishment was prescient, for photographic practices once associated with the ethnic Chinese – including studio, amateur and family photography – would become more widespread among Indonesians of all backgrounds in the postcolonial period. Despite this history of seemingly inexorable spread and proliferation, however, her comment reminds us of the ambivalences that attend the *contoh* as it disrupts barriers of ethnicity, religion and class.

Memorial portraits

Why would this woman have associated photographs "all over the place" with "Chineseness"? Having grown up in the colonial era, she might be expected to associate the camera primarily with the Dutch. For many years much of the vocabulary associated with photography in Indonesia was derived from European languages (for camera, *toestel*, for negative, *cliché*). The homes of European and indigenous elites would also have provided object lessons in photographic display as an integral feature of modern domestic space. It is probable that non-elite indigenous people would have been more likely to view the interior of an ethnic Chinese home (if only glimpsed behind a shop front) than a Dutch home. But the woman's association of a distastefully excessive photography with the ethnic Chinese also likely stems from the *kind* of photographs that were displayed in ethnic Chinese homes and the religiously- and ethnically-marked ritual practices that surrounded them.

Among the images most prominently visible within ethnic Chinese homes and most linked with a specifically "Chinese" identity were memorial

portraits. Portraits of deceased family members were (and continue to be) carried in funeral processions, displayed during funerary rites, and later hung on walls or placed on altars (*meja abu*). Family members pray and burn incense before these images in order to "face the soul" of the deceased and seek their blessing.[54]

The use of ancestral portraits in Chinese funerary and memorial practices long predates photography. In imperial China, painted ancestor images were typically almost life-sized, full-body portraits showing frontally posed men and women wearing clothing and holding objects that signalled their social status. In her study of early photographers of Hong Kong, Roberta Wue notes that in the late nineteenth century cheaper photographic images quickly became substitutes for the painted ancestor portraits previously used by elites in commemorative family rituals.[55] These photographs initially imitated the earlier painted portraits in their "static and frontal seated pose" and inclusion of the whole body within the frame.[56] By the 1910s, however, it had become common in China for an image showing only the torso and head to be used as an ancestral portrait instead of the full body image, thereby eliminating the objects and clothing that had indicated the status and social context of the deceased. This shift in the conventions of funeral portraits may have been related to a shift from an imperial order to a modern, national one in which insignia of status became less important than the standardised, serialised citizen embodied in the identity portrait. The ancestral portrait, in other words, came to resemble the modern identity photograph.

Such a shift seems also to have occurred among ethnic Chinese in the Indies. By at least the 1950s, and quite possibly already in the last decades of the colonial period, ethnic Chinese had adopted the identity photograph as a suitable and ultimately standard memorial portrait.[57] A photograph taken at a ritual commemorating 100 days after the death of a wealthy ethnic Chinese woman in Padang may show this shift underway (figure 5). High above the empty bed, presumably that of the deceased, is a large, full-body, frontal photographic portrait of a seated woman; positioned lower and to the side of the bed is a large studio portrait of the deceased, vignetted so as to show only her face and upper torso. Enlargement and vignetting give the image a monumental quality, heightening its honorific function. Although this

54 See Strassler, *Refracted Visions*, 150.

55 Roberta Wue, Joana Waley-Cohen and Edwin K. Lai, *Picturing Hong Kong: Photography 1855-1910* (New York: George Braziller/Asia Society Galleries, 1997).

56 Ibid., 38.

57 See KITLV Image Collection, Image 142444, c. 1950, showing an identity photograph on dispay with the coffin at a Chinese funeral.

Figure 5 Fr. M. Dorotheo, Memorial portraits in a Chinese home, 100-day funerary ritual, Padang, c. 1900

Source: KITLV Image Collection, Leiden, Image 25871

portrait was not taken as an identity photograph, the tighter framing and the elimination of backdrop, props and other elements that might locate the subject socially prefigure the features of the identity photograph. Indeed, there were clearly some formal qualities of the identity photograph that were well suited to memorial portraiture. Many of the traditional aesthetic criteria required for Chinese ancestor portraits are also met by the anthropometric identity photograph: the formal and frontal pose, the minimisation of distracting shadows, the emphasis on a complete inventory of symmetrical features, the sombre, blank expression that refuses to intimate interiority.

As identity photographs came into use in the Indies, ethnic Chinese were once again at the vanguard of a photographic practice.[58] Not only did ethnic Chinese studio photographers make many of the identity photographs used

58 For a longer discussion of the history of the identity photograph, the ethnic Chinese community, and the colonial and postcolonial state, see Strassler, *Refracted Visions*, Chapter Three.

for drivers' licenses, professional society memberships and other purposes in the final years of the colonial regime, but ethnic Chinese were subject to state surveillance and required to carry identification documents long before the practice was generalised to the entire population in the climate of heightened political paranoia of the New Order. During the Japanese occupation, every ethnic Chinese was required to carry an identity card with a photograph.

The resemblances between the identity photograph and the memorial portrait, coupled with the growing ubiquity of these images, presumably led to their widespread adoption as memorial portraits by ethnic Chinese. This melding together of the genres of government-issued identity photographs and memorial portraiture at first glance appears to be a strange and rather ironic marriage of two competing systems of recognition and belonging. Rituals of ethnic and national belonging would seem to be at odds with each other, especially in the case of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, whose ethnicity has served as an impediment to national inclusion. Yet the identity photo's status as a sign of state recognition might have made it a desirable memorial image precisely for the legitimacy and modernity it connoted.

In the postcolonial period, it was this status as a sign of national belonging, as well as the identity photograph's increasing spread to the wider population during the New Order, that paved the way for the dissemination of memorial portraiture among the indigenous Indonesian community. Although the explicitly religious dimension of ethnic Chinese memorial portraits was not taken up by non-Chinese, the practice of using identity photographs as memorial portraits in funeral processions and rituals migrated in the postcolonial period to the indigenous Christian and, later, majority Islamic communities in Java. So, too, the practice of hanging enlarged identity photographs of deceased family members in places of work and in more public rooms of the house became common in the last decades of the twentieth century. Non-Chinese people's houses, therefore, do today often have "photographs all over the place".

Conclusion: Dangers of the *contoh*

Every photograph is, in a sense, a *contoh* image; every image participates in generating the wider image repertoire by which people learn to imagine and present themselves in new ways. All photographs carry at least the potential to serve as models, to set in motion relations of mimesis that echo the workings of photography itself as a technology of mechanical reproduction. Each photograph disseminates a gaze, modelling a way of seeing that can be adopted whether one is behind or in front of the camera.

Yet in all photographs there is a tension between the iconic (the modular possibilities of likeness and resemblance) and the indexical (the irreducible specificity of a particular subject located in time and space).[59]

If the logic of the *contoh* provides a way of thinking about photographs in general, I nevertheless have tried to suggest that it offers, more specifically, a productive way to think about ethnic Chinese as conduits of modernity in the late-colonial period. I began this essay with the *contoh* image defined in rather narrow, literal terms: the photographs that provide "examples" of the mail order merchant's wares, the studio photographer's *contoh* featuring the photographer and his family modelling various poses that customers might assume. These *contoh* images make visible the labour of ethnic Chinese in providing models for modernity in the Indies, and gesture to the importance of photography as a medium by which modern ways of dressing, posing and conducting family life were disseminated across racialised lines of ethnicity, class and religion.

The ethical period marks the era when ethnic Chinese began, through photography, to model modernity in the Indies for themselves and others. It may be argued that, in the colonial era, Europeans remained the most influential *contoh* of modernity; Mrázek aptly calls the mannequins wearing European fashions in shop windows "exemplary white dolls".[60] But ethnic Chinese helped model the possibility that modernity was not confined to Europeans, and this role would become more salient in the postcolonial period.

After independence, as increasing numbers of indigenous Indonesians gained access to photography, ethnic Chinese photographers and photographic practices served as their most immediate models. Ethnic Chinese studio photographers made the phantasmagoric dream world of capitalist modernity virtually available to people learning to see themselves as modern Indonesians. Studios often "modelled" domestic photography, offering props such as birthday cakes and displaying *contoh* of baby pictures and graduation portraits, which educated customers about how the camera might represent a modern family life. Ethnic Chinese photographers crafted the identity photographs that figured centrally in the mundane but significant rituals of national belonging. Even the most markedly "Chinese"

59 I rely here on Charles S. Peirce's discussion of the iconic sign as that which refers to its object by likeness or resemblance. This is quite different from the common sense of an "iconic image" in which a singular image comes to stand for an era, an event, or a figure: see Charles S. Peirce. "Logic of semiotic: The theory of signs," in: *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, ed. Justus Buchler (New York: Dover, 1955).

60 Mrázek, "Indonesian dandy," 131.

photographic practice – the use of memorial photographs – spread to the majority population and became integrated with that most "Indonesian" of portraits, the identity photograph used in state-authorised documents.

But was the "Chinese" face in the merchant's catalogue, in the *contoh* images hung on the photography studio's walls, in the memorial portraits that accompanied funeral processions through the streets, really so invisible? If ethnic Chinese photography provided models of modern appearances and practices that were potentially available to all, the warning of the mother to the son points to the fact that this process was not seamless. The operation of the *contoh* was always complicated by a certain awareness of difference – or anxiety about difference's potential erosion. The specificity of the "Chinese" faces visible within these images was always in tension with their promise of a universally accessible global modernity.

What was this "difference" that the "Chinese" signified? The alterity of the Chinese was defined by the colonial and later, the postcolonial state, in racialised terms, but in practice was as much a function of class privilege, cosmopolitan links to translocal circuits and access to the commodities and technologies that signified "modernity". One could say that photography itself played a role in the process by which an ambivalently desired modernity, wealth and participation in consumer capitalism became grafted onto the racialised difference of the "Chinese". A Javanese woman, asked about her memories of the photography studios that operated during her childhood in Yogyakarta in the 1950s, stated that "they were always [owned by] *orang Cina*". This comment led to a brief tirade about the materialism and greed of the ethnic Chinese that was unusual only in its open vitriol. The photo studio – with its allure as a dream space of virtual access to modern commodities and translocal communications – immediately brought to mind an aggrieved perception that her own access to wealth and the promise of modernity was interrupted by the Chinese. For her, the ethnic Chinese were obstructive gatekeepers, not transparent mediators, of modernity. Her comment in turn recalls that of a young Javanese woman who, describing her childhood in central Java in the 1970s, recounted that when she and her friends bought clothes at the Chinese-Indonesian-owned shop in town, they would say that their stiff new clothes "smelled Chinese". The same woman remembered the experience of crowding with other children onto the patio of the home of an ethnic Chinese family in her village, peering through the windows; they were trying to glimpse the family's TV, the first in the village.

It is in mundane recollections such as these that we begin to register the dangers of being models of a modernity that promises to be available to all,

but remains in fact inaccessible to most.[61] The position of ethnic Chinese as mediators of a modernity that for many Indonesians was both an object of desire and suspiciously alien was and remains a deeply fraught one. The *contoh* photograph, with its ambiguity generated by the tension between the specificity of the photographic index and the modularity of the reproducible image, thus also provides an apt metaphor for the ambivalent position of ethnic Chinese as pioneers of photography and, more broadly, of modern practices in the late-colonial Indies and postcolonial Indonesia.

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61 James T. Siegel has written illuminatingly of the links between "Chinese", money, and violence: see James T. Siegel, *Solo in the New Order: Language and Hierarchy in an Indonesian City* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), Chapter Nine.

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8 Modernity and middle classes in the Netherlands Indies

Cultivating cultural citizenship

Henk Schulte Nordholt

Introduction[1]

The Ethical Policy, which the colonial administration in the Netherlands Indies adopted as a guideline at the beginning of the 20th century, was not only aimed at uplifting and developing "native" society: it went hand in hand with large-scale military expeditions. The Dutch mission to bring "modern civilisation" to the archipelago was based on the idea that the "uplifting" of the population could only be achieved by establishing firm colonial control. Therefore, the Dutch "white man's burden", or *mission civilisatrice,* was in large parts of the archipelago accompanied by intimidating violence, creating a regime of fear that resonated in local memories for years to come.[2]

Most historians considered the late-colonial state the Dutch established in the Indonesian archipelago after 1900 as self-evident, needing no further explanation. Yet it is amazing that such a vast archipelago, populated by more than 60 million people in 1930, could be governed by only a handful of Europeans. At that time the European population consisted of 240,000 people and formed only 0.4% of the total population, while the heart of the colonial state consisted of a civil service of approximately 100,000 people, 15% of whom at the most were European.[3]

The establishment of a state of violence is not the principal explanation for the relative ease with which a small European minority controlled the archipelago. More important was the efficient way in which the colonial administration employed a system of indirect rule both in Java and in most parts of the so-called Outer Provinces. As Heather Sutherland explained in

1 An earlier version of this chapter was published in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 43 (2011): 425-457.

2 Henk Schulte Nordholt, "A genealogy of violence," in *Roots of Violence in Indonesia:. Contemporary Violence in Historical Perspective*, ed. Freek Colombijn and Thomas Lindblad (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), 33-61.

3 *Statistisch jaaroverzicht van Nederlandsch-Indië 1928* (Weltevreden: Landsdrukkerij, 1929), 368-383.

her study on the indigenous administrative elite (*Pangreh Pradja*) in Java, an incorporated aristocracy provided colonial authority with a "traditional" face.[4] Although indirect rule gave the impression of maintaining the status quo, sociologist J.A.A. van Doorn emphasised the interventionist and innovative capacity of the late-colonial state. In his book *De laatste eeuw van Indië* (*The Last Century of the Indies*) he outlined the colonial administration as a technocratic project in which agricultural extension, expansion of irrigation, railways, education, health care and credit banking formed key elements. Moreover, the colonial administration aimed at systematically rearranging social relations through a paternalistic form of social engineering. According to Van Doorn, the innovative engineer eager to implement developmental blueprints, and not the conservative administrator wanting to maintain the traditional forms of authority, was the role model for the ambitions of the late-colonial state.[5]

Taken together, violence, indirect rule and an interventionist technocracy may seem to provide a sufficient explanation for the degree to which the Dutch succeeded in maintaining their hold on the "Tropical Netherlands" until 1942. Central to this approach is that the success of the colonial state is exclusively attributed to the administrative agency of the Dutch authorities. However, such a top-down perspective fails to consider the essential role played by indigenous (lower) middle classes in sustaining the colonial system.

The political importance of these middle classes has been underlined because they were seen as the breeding ground of the nationalist movement. These middle classes consisted of lower civil servants, teachers, medical personnel, railway employees, clerks of European companies and journalists. By leaving their former, local surroundings, the colonial state was becoming their new habitat. Prefiguring an idea launched by Benedict Anderson, the Dutch anthropologist Jan van Baal described how the rise of the nationalist movement, originating from the urban middle classes, developed within the confines of the colonial state.[6] Already in 1976 Van

4 Heather Sutherland, *The Making of a Bureaucratic Elite: The Colonial Transformation of the Javanese Priyayi* (Singapore: Heinemann, 1979).

5 J.A.A. van Doorn, *De laatste eeuw van Indië: Ontwikkeling en ondergang van een koloniaal project* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1994). For an account of the way engineers changed the Netherlands at that time, see Auke van der Woud, *Een nieuwe wereld: Het ontstaan van het moderne Nederland* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2006).

6 Jan van Baal, "Tussen kolonie en nationale staat: De koloniale staat," in *Dekolonisatie en vrijheid: Een sociaal-wetenschappelijke discussie over emancipatieprocessen in de Derde Wereld*, ed. H.J.M. Claessen, J. Kaayk and R.J.A. Lambregts (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1976), 92-108; Benedict

Baal emphasised that for the nationalist movement the colonial state's boundaries formed the natural borders of the new nation.

In most of the literature there seems to be a consensus about the logical and linear connection between the rise of indigenous urban middle classes as a motor for modernity and the rise of the nationalist movement.[7] But this historical sequence involving urbanisation, a rising middle class, and the spread of modernity and nationalism obscures two important features concerning the very nature of these indigenous middle classes.

Firstly, the radical nationalist movement of the 1920s and 30s represented a minority amidst many other organisations striving for less radical goals. Hans van Miert was right when he stated that the historiography of Indonesian nationalism has a teleological nature in which more moderate, culturally or regionally oriented organisations tend to be overlooked. In contrast to mainstream historiography, in which secular nationalism is depicted as a coherent and inevitable development, he describes a fragmented field in which a variety of regional, cultural and religious organisations operated, which were less radical than the nationalistic parties led by Sukarno, Hatta and Sjahrir.[8]

Van Miert was not the first to point to the blind spots in nationalist historiography. In an important but little noticed article William O'Malley had already questioned the way nationalist historiography had monopolised the past.[9] The nuance O'Malley wanted to bring forward was completely overshadowed by the publication of Benedict Anderson's book *Imagined Communities* in 1983. This study offers a streamlined narrative in which regional organisations (such as *Jong Java* [Young Java] and the *Jong Sumatranen Bond* [Young Sumatrans' Association]) eventually gave way to a successful secular nationalism under the leadership of Sukarno. However, O'Malley had pointed out that among the followers of radical nationalist organisations there was primarily an anti-colonial attitude rather than an outspoken pro-nationalist conviction. Moreover, he showed that on a regional level moderate organisations were able to mobilise many more fol-

Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Second rev. ed. (London/New York: Verso, 1991).

7 W.F. Wertheim, *Indonesian Society in Transition: A Study of Social Change* (The Hague/Bandung: Van Hoeve, 1956); Adrian Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

8 Hans van Miert, *Een koel hoofd en een warm hart: Nationalisme, Javanisme en jeugdbeweging in Nederlands-Indië 1918-1930* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1995).

9 William O'Malley, "Second thoughts on Indonesian nationalism," in *Indonesia: Australian Perspectives*, ed. J.J. Fox et al. (Canberra: ANU, 1980), 601-613.

lowers than the radical nationalists. As an example he mentioned the *Pagoejoeban Pasoendan* (Pasundan Association) in west Java and the *Pakempalan Kawoelo Ngajogjakarta* (Association of Inhabitants of Yogyakarta) in central Java. Apart from serving socio-economic interests, these organisations were mainly culturally oriented and regionally anchored. According to the principle that the winner takes all, Indonesian nationalist historiography eventually monopolised the past for itself. In doing so it obscured internal differences within the nationalist movement, while it ignored less radical mass organisations with a cultural and regional orientation which, in the late-colonial period, had a much larger following.

Secondly, the linear, nationalist historiography also conceals the fact that the majority of the indigenous middle classes were not primarily interested in joining the nationalist movement. Instead, it is my hypothesis that they were primarily interested in exploring modern urban life. What they aimed at in the first place was not a nation but a lifestyle, access to which could be obtained by joining the framework of the colonial system. In doing so they unintentionally helped to consolidate the colonial regime. The connection between embracing a modern lifestyle and supporting the colonial regime could be very direct: for the majority of indigenous students, higher education was expected to result in an appointment with the government.[10]

In 1930 at least 500,000 people belonged to the higher or lower native middle classes in the Netherlands Indies, while about half of them had some proficiency in the Dutch language. The vast majority of the indigenous middle classes were connected to the colonial state because they had either a government job or were employed by an institution closely related to the colonial state.[11] This is not a large population compared to the estimated workforce of twenty million people at that time, but it was this group in particular that sustained the colonial system.

The relations between a regime and its subjects are complex and cannot exclusively be understood in strictly institutional terms. Recent anthropological studies on the nature of the state emphasise the informal interface between state and society and, in particular, the way in which the state is embedded in society.[12] Such an approach is relevant to understanding the

10 Robert Elson, *The Idea of Indonesia: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 88.

11 Kees Groeneboer, *Weg tot het westen: Het Nederlands voor Indië 1660-1950* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1993); *Volkstelling 1930,* vol. VIII*: Overzicht voor Nederlandsch-Indië* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1936).

12 Akhil Gupta, "Blurred boundaries: The discourse of corruption, the culture of politics, and the imagined state," in *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*, ed. Aradhana Sharma and Akhil

political importance of the indigenous middle classes in the Netherlands Indies. They were positioned in the border area between colonial state and society, where they anchored the regime in society. It was in this same border area that they were confronted with the advent of modernity, to which they actively responded in their own lives.

I am fully aware of the fact that "modernity" is a fashionable and problematic container concept. It refers to ideas derived from the Enlightenment; in many theories it is closely connected to the development of capitalism and it is thought to be particularly expressed in urban surroundings. "Modernity" refers to the primacy of the individual and to the ideal of equality, to notions of development, progress and social mobility; it privileges the new. It has been suggested that, apart from a hegemonic Western modernity, separate colonial modernities or alternative modernities could exist. The historian Frederick Cooper objects to such a differentiation, because it suggests that these alternative forms were derived from an original and, by implication, superior Western modernity. Instead, he prefers to investigate how certain groups of people in very specific situations claim particular aspects of modernity and give shape to it.[13]

In this chapter I connect modernity in particular with the emergence of new patterns of consumption, notions of hygiene and the nuclear family as a vehicle of change, which helped to define specific middle-class gender roles. Elsbeth Locher-Scholten rightly points out that for many people in Asia the West was not the sole model of modernity: Japan offered equally important examples. Miriam Silverberg and Harry Harootunian offer excellent studies of how Japanese middle classes appropriated modernity in the pre-war period.[14] Harootunian emphasises that modernity took shape in everyday life, in fashion, media, transport, work, leisure and family life. Because most people experienced modernity in this everyday context, we need to make everyday life the object of research. Silverberg and Harootunian based their analyses on extensive studies of daily life by Japanese researchers in the pre-war period. Compared to the many sources on Japan, research on this topic in the Netherlands Indies and Indonesia is, however, very scarce.

Gupta (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 211-242.

13 Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 113-149.

14 Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Women and the Colonial State: Essays on Gender and Modernity in the Netherlands Indies 1900-1942* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000), 32-35; Miriam Silverberg, "Constructing the Japanese ethnography of modernity", *Journal of Asian Studies* 51 (1992): 30-54; Harry Harootunian, *History's Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Question of Everyday Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

This chapter is an attempt to explore a similar approach for Indonesia and to link expressions of modernity also with the notion of cultural citizenship. In *Women and the Colonial State*, Elsbeth Locher-Scholten addresses the problematic nature of the notion of "colonial citizenship". According to her, this concept should not be understood in a political sense, because the civil rights of colonial subjects were very limited. Therefore she places "colonial citizenship" in a wider cultural context and sees the colonial state as a cultural project in which modernity played a key role.[15] This approach is helpful because it offers an opportunity to get away from the teleological perspective of nationalist historiography, and to look instead at the way in which the middle classes wanted to participate in a new modern lifestyle within the framework of the colonial state. I propose to use the term "cultural citizenship" in the same way.

Coined by Renato Rosaldo, the term "cultural citizenship" has primarily been used to identify the position of ethnic minorities and other marginalised groups in the United States and in Southeast Asia and to explore their possibilities to achieve empowerment and emancipation.[16] Whereas full citizenship refers to the rule of law, equality and the rights and duties of the individual, cultural citizenship, according to Rosaldo, stands for culture, difference and the identity of marginalised groups. This is not the place to discuss the problematic relationship between legal citizenship and cultural diversity in contemporary contexts.[17] My intention is to move the notion of cultural citizenship back in time to the late-colonial period. In the context of the Netherlands Indies, cultural citizenship should not be applied to marginalised ethnic minorities but to the indigenous middle classes who inhabited the urban centres of the late-colonial state. In contrast to the small and predominantly white minority who controlled the colonial administration and dominated to a large extent the colonial economy, the indigenous middle classes were denied access to power. Through educational programs and commercial advertisements they were, however,

15 Locher-Scholten, *Women and the Colonial State*, 38.

16 Renato Rosaldo, "Introduction: The borders of belonging: Nation and citizen in the hinterlands," in *Cultural Citizenship in Island Southeast Asia: Nation and Belonging in the Hinterlands*, ed. Renato Rosaldo (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 1-15.

17 For a critique of Rosaldo, see Aihwa Ong, "Cultural citizenship as subject-making: Immigrants negotiate racial and cultural boundaries in the United States," *Current Anthropology* 37 (1996): 737-751; for a critical discussion of citizenship and cultural diversity, see Gerard Delanty, "Two conceptions of cultural citizenship: A review of recent literature on culture and citizenship," *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics* 1:3 (2002): 60-66.

Figure 1 Advertisement for Van Nelle tobacco

Source: *Pandji Poestaka* 1-2, 1940

explicitly invited to abandon traditional habits and to become the new "cultural citizens" of the colony.

There is, in contrast to the conventional historiographical narrative of urban middle classes, modernity and nationalism leading to anti-colonial resistance and revolution, room for an alternative approach in which urban middle classes, modernity, everyday life and the colonial state formed the key components of cultural citizenship for Indonesians. To provide an insight into how modernity took shape in the everyday life of the indigenous middle classes in the Netherlands Indies, I examine advertisements and school posters as expressions of what Ann Stoler – albeit in a different context – has called "an education of desire".[18] In the late-colonial period the indigenous middle classes were exposed to a desirable lifestyle which they could acquire through the purchase of particular commodities and lifestyles. Through advertisements and school posters the indigenous middle classes were not only introduced to these new lifestyles, but the images also reinforced the interests of the colonial regime.[19]

18 Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's* History of Sexuality *and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 1995), 165-195.

19 Van der Putten has argued that during the Great Depression in Malaya an increase in advertisements for cheap Western products, intended to persuade consumers to adopt a Western

Figure 2 Advertisement for Droste Cacao

Djongos, CACAO tjap ZUSTER doea !
DROSTE'S CACAO
Ngati-ati, adja nganti keliroe, lo! Soklat DROSTE tjap ZUSTER! Prajogi toewan! Pantjèn, njonjah tjarijos, soklat DROSTE tjap ZUSTER dipoen oendjoek étja, dipoen damel koewih-koewih étja. Laré-laré oegi karem sanget. Moelanè akoe ndjaloek
Droste tjap ZUSTER
G. HOPPENSTEDT - Batavia - Semarang - Soerabaja - Padang

Source: *Pandji Poestaka* 85, 1932

A curriculum of advertisements and school posters

The following advertisements are drawn from the *Pandji Poestaka* magazine from the first quarter of 1940.[20] The magazine, which appeared twice a week,

lifestyle, stimulated the expansion of indigenous mass media considerably. It would be interesting to see whether a similar development took place in the Netherlands Indies. See Jan van der Putten, "Negotiating the Great Depression: The rise of popular culture and consumerism in early-1930s Malaya," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 41 (2010): 21-45.

20 *Pandji Poestaka* (Batavia: Balai Poestaka), January-March 1940.

Figure 3 Advertisement for Colgate toothpaste

Napas segar
dan berbaoe sedap
Boesa dari COLGATE
jang wangi, segar dan
moestadjab itoe, gampang
masoek disemoea sela2 gigi,
dimana sisa makanan jang
menjebabkan napas ber-
baoe koerang enak dan gigi lekas roesak, dapat dibasmi.
Semoea gigi mendjadi bersih, poetih dan koeat. Djika njonja
dan toean ingin mempoenjai paras jang elok, gigi dan
senjoem jang menarik, sikatlah gigi2
paling sedikit 2 × sehari dengan
Obat gosok gigi COLGATE
COLGATE
adalah lebih hemat,
tjoema perloe me-
makai separonja!
OBAT GOSOK GIGI
COLGATE
COLGATE'S
RIBBON DENTAL CREAM
Tube ketjil 10 ct., tube sedang 15 ct., tube besar 30 ct. BAROE! Familistube (2 × tube besar) 50 ct.

Source: *Pandji Poestaka* 18, 1940

was published by the government publishing house Balai Poestaka. With a circulation of 7000 copies it reached the indigenous middle classes, informing them about international developments, the appointment of executive civil servants, agricultural policy, cultural heritage and the Dutch royal family, among other topics. The advertisements in *Pandji Poestaka* refer explicitly to consumption and fashion as constitutive aspects of modern

Figure 4 Advertisement for Lux perfumed soap

Jean Arthur JANG TJANTIK KASI
NASEHAT BOEAT MENDAPETI KAEILOKAN
Saja belom perna ketemoe seorang lelaki jang tida gila sama paras mocka jang eilok. Sebetoelnja keliwat gampang sekali boeat membikin koelit selaloe tinggal halves dan liljin sama saboen wangi Lux. Saja selamanja pakai saboen itoe.
Si Roos selaloe bersedih, sebab soeaminja hampir tak pernah dirooemah
Sembilan bintang film moesti mempoenjai koelit jang sempoerna . . . . . maka itoe 9 antara 10 dari semoea bintang² dari lajar poetih memakai selaloe saboen wangi Lux. Mereka tahoe, bahwa boeahnja jang empoek dari saboen ini jang poetih bersih menghaloeskan koelit mereka seperti beloedroe. Saboen Lux akan berboeat seroepa itoe djoega oemi koelit Njonja.
Toeroetlah tjontoh bintang² film . . . . dan moelailah besok pakai saboen wangi LUX.
Pada soeatoe hari si Mia..temannja si Roos datang mengoendjoengi
Tida ada kesalahan pendjagaan kesehatan Roos, kerana kau selaloe pakai saboen kegemaran bintang² film ..... SABOEN WANGI LUX
Wah senang hati kau sekarang, Roos
Ja, Mia sekarang pengalaman saja soedah lama dan semoea kawan² saja soedah mengetahoei hanja pakai saboen SABOEN WANGI LUX
SABOEN WANGI LUX
SABOEN KETJANTIKAN BINTANG² FILM
LEVER'S ZEEPFABRIEKEN N.V. BATAVIA
LTZ 31 - 309-M

Source: *Pandji Poestaka* 23, 1940

lifestyles. Just as everywhere else in the world, smoking cigarettes was one of the attributes of a modern lifestyle for men (figures 1, 2, 4, 7 and 11). Wearing a tie was also a sign of distinction and modernity (figures 2, 5 and 6).

The cigarette-smoking man in the advertisement for Droste Cacao (figure 2) represents in several ways the new self-consciously cultural citizen of the colony. Drinking Droste cocoa ("Don't bring the wrong brand." – "Yes sir.") in a public place was an expression of a modern urban lifestyle. The way the man

Figure 5 Advertisement for national railways

Berpergian..
Dapat dilakoekan dengan berbagai djalan. Tetapi jang SEAMAN-AMAN-NJA oentoek toean anak-beranak ialah S.S. Apalagi berpergian dengan S.S. itoe MOERAH! Oentoek orang jang hendak berpergian berkeliling dengan isteri dan anak-anaknja diadakan tarief jang lebih moerah lagi, gezinstarieven namanja. (Mintalah segala keterangan jang perloe tentang itoe kepada stationschef). Ingatlah akan hal itoe bila toean hendak berpergian. Djaoehilah bahaja, pilih djalan jang moerah dan oléh sebab itoe berpergianlah dengan kerèta api, dengan
STAATSSPOORWEGEN TJEPAT — AMAN — MOERAH

Source: *Pandji Poestaka* 17, 1940

is dressed (with a tie), sitting cross-legged and displaying his fancy shoes, in the company of an educated woman (wearing spectacles), is in sharp contrast with the bare-footed waiter whose body-language represents tradition and submission. The customer's black *peci* (headdress) does not denote nationalist convictions. Instead, he is a dandy-like cultural citizen of the colony who has adopted in a relaxed manner the habits of his white overlords.[21]

When women featured as the main characters in advertisements other criteria applied. Beauty and cleanliness were most important, and Colgate toothpaste promised fresh breath, strong white teeth and an attractive smile, provided women brushed their teeth twice a day (figure 3).

Cleanliness and hygiene were presented as crucial to a good marriage, as evidenced by the following advert. Roos was greatly worried that her husband was not interested in her any longer and she took her friend Mia's advice – and that of film star Jean Arthur – to use perfumed Lux soap,

21 See also Rudolf Mrázek, "Indonesian dandy: The politics of clothes in the late colonial period, 1893-1942," in *Outward Appearances: Dressing State and Society in Indonesia*, ed. Henk Schulte Nordholt (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1997), 117-150.

Figure 6 Advertisement for a watch

Kerèta api adalah peroesahaän besar, dan „precies waktoe" adalah sjarat jang paling penting.
Toean A. K., Stationschef di Djawa Barat,
Toean A. K., Stationschef dari sala satoe setasion besar di Djawa-Barat, sangat senang hatinja memakai arlodji tjap Merak. Demikian katanja dalam soeratnja pada kami:
„Arlodji Merak saja beloem pernah salah djalannja, meski soedah hampir empat tahoen saja pakai. Tidak pernah saja melihat djam setasion, ketjoeali bocat mengontrole, apa dia akoer djalannja dengan Merak saja, apa tidak. Kalau tidak, tentoe djam setasionlah jang salah! Lagi bockan main koeatnja arlodji tjap Merak itoe!"
Arlodji tjap Merak bagoes poela roepanja, manis, modern, mendjadi perhiasan bocat orang jang memakainja, tetapi moerah.
Arlodji MERAK
CHRONOMETER
PATENT LONDON
Bikinan negeri Zwitserland, tempatnja terbikin dari wadja jang tidak berkarat.
15 BATOE-ANKER
Belilah sekarang arlodji Merak sebeloem harganja naik lebih tinggi. Membeli seboeah arlodji Merak berarti toean mempoenjai arlodji jang bagoes seoemoer hidoep. Sekarang toean masih dapat membelinja dengan harga moerah.

Source: *Pandji Poestaka* 3, 1940

just as nine out of ten movie stars did. Lux makes a woman's skin soft like velvet (figure 4). To her relief, Roos found that her husband now came home straight after work and, as we see in the background, was clearly content. While men often appeared in a dandy-like fashion, then, women played a central role in representations of cleanliness and hygiene, which were also considered to be important attributes of the modern state.

In many publications the train is used as a prominent symbol of modern times. The impressive technology promised a new experience of movement and velocity. With the slogan "Quick, safe and cheap", families were invited to make trips at a special family rate (figure 5).

The new transport system was attended by a new time regime using timetables which required clocks and watches.[22] As the advertisement for watches of Merak (patented in London, made in Switzerland) says: "The railways are a great enterprise for which knowing the right time is the most

22 See Johan Goudsblom, "The worm and the clock: On the genesis of a global time regime," in *Time Matters: Global and Local Time in Asian Societies,* ed. Willem van Schendel and Henk Schulte Nordholt (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2001), 19-36.

Figure 7 Advertisement for Philips bulbs

Terang sebagai siang
keadaännja toean poenja kamar djika toean memakai lampoe PHILIPS.
Lampoe² PHILIPS semata-mata dibikin oentoek mengasih penerangan jang tjoekoep dengan pemakaian stroom sedikit. Lampoe² PHILIPS memakai stroom lebih sedikit dari pada jang dinamakan lampoe moerah, tida bisa item, mengasih tjahaja lebih terang, maka itoe sangat mengoentoengkan dipakainja.
lampoe
PHILIPS
menjimpan banjak oewang

Source: *Pandji Poestaka* 10, 1940

essential condition, which is the reason why this station master from west Java should have a reliable watch." At the same time the advertisement suggests that people wanting to keep pace with the times don't want to waste precious time and should purchase a watch that is modern, cheap and strong, and guaranteed to last a lifetime.

As was shown in figures 3 and 4, nuclear families played a central part in a new, modern style of living. In the Philips advert we can see a happy family sitting together around the table in full harmony under the shining radiance of electric light (figure 7).[23] Mother is sewing, father is smoking and reading the paper – his eye is probably caught by an advert for Philips bulbs – and their little daughter is reading too. The composition has a very Dutch appearance and most likely an advert with a Dutch family served as a model for this illustration. Ironically, the girl in this drawing has fair hair, an unintended reference to the transformative magic of modernity.

The caption beneath the illustration reads, in colloquial Malay, that Philips bulbs produce more light, require less electricity, last longer, and consequently are cheaper. So the emphasis is on the affordability of the product, while at the same time the illustration is a good example of domesticated modernity. Here we see an image that the colonial authorities and the bulbs manufacturer promoted to the middle classes and that reflected bourgeois virtues such as familial harmony, stability, literacy and diligence, well-protected within the safety of the nuclear family.

These images represent only a few examples from a handful of issues of *Pandji Poestaka.* More research is needed to see whether other magazines further removed from the authorities' influence display a different type of advertisement and different images of modern, middle-class Indonesian consumption. A preliminary survey suggests, however, that most advertisements were rather evenly distributed among different magazines.[24]

In contrast to the appearance of the global modern girl in the 1920s – who could be recognised by her bobbed hair, painted lips and an elongated body, and who challenged the traditional order by disregarding her role as mother and wife – Barbara Hatley and Susan Blackburn conclude that in various women's magazines appearing in the Netherlands Indies during the 1930s much emphasis was placed on the importance of cleanliness and hygiene and on the central role of women in the nuclear family.[25] The new nuclear

23 For another analysis of this advertisement, see Henk Maier, "Maelstrom and electricity," in *Outward Appearances: Dressing State and Society in Indonesia*, ed. Henk Schulte Nordholt (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1997), 181-198.

24 Hermanu, ed., *Pikat. Pameran iklan cetak generasi ke-2* (Yogyakarta/Jakarta: Bentara Budaya, 2006).

25 Barbara Hatley and Susan Blackburn, "Representations of women's roles in household and society in Indonesian women's writing of the 1930s," in *Women and Households in Indonesia: Cultural Notions and Social Practices*, ed. Juliette Koning et al. (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), 45-67. On the modern girl, see Alys Eve Weinbaum et al., eds., *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008). There

Figure 8 Advertisement for the telephone

Hallo, Apotheek, njoewoen soepados énggal kèngkènan mendet recept!
Toedjoenipoen sampoen kagoengan TELEFOON.
Nalika poetranipoen ingkang alit ndadak gerah, namoeng . . . . . Rrrrrrrring. telefoon dokter!
Sasampoenipoen ladjeng . . . . . Rrrrrrrring. telefoon „grijodjampi" (apotheek), soepados mendet recepipoen.
Sadaja waoe prasasat namoeng sakedèpan. ladjeng angsal pitoeloengan toemrap poetranipoen ingkang gerah waoe.
Toean dokter oegi tjarios: „Wah, toedjoenipoen pandjenengan sampoen kagoengan telefoon, saoepami dèrèng, wèh, mesti jen kedaloe-warsa!"
POST - TELEGRAAF - TELEFOON
POENIKA PANJAMBOENGING DOENJA INGKANG RIKATIPOEN TANPA OEPAMI!

Source: *Bale Warti Wanito Oetomo* 2-1-1937

family functioned as a vehicle of modernity, because it showed no links with the traditional world and the extended family with all its obligations.

It is interesting to look in this respect at magazines that were not radical in character but were read by relatively large segments of middle-class women.[26] The magazine *Bale Warti Wanito Oetomo*, which was affiliated with Budi Utomo, the first association of young upper-middle-class Javanese intellectuals, reflects in its articles and advertisements the efforts of Javanese upper-middle-class women to be loyal "soul mates" of their husbands and responsible mothers of their children, with an emphasis on the need to provide a balanced upbringing and be active agents in the shaping of modern households.[27] The advertisement (in Javanese) for the modern telephone is a telling example of this ambition (figure 8). The mother phones the local

are clear traces of the modern girl in various advertisements for toothpaste and soap in the Netherlands Indies; see Hermanu, *Pikat*.

26 I would like to thank Abdul Wahid for his assistance in investigating the content of several women's magazines and Willem van der Molen for translating the text of figure 8.

27 *Bale Warti Wanito Oetomo* (Yogyakarta: Pangreh Hageng Wanito Oetomo, 1936-1941).

Figure 9 Cover of *Soeara 'Aisjijah* emphasising the role of the educating mother

Source: *Soeara 'Aisjijah* 7-12-1932

Figure 10 Advertisement for a modern textile shop

Source: *Soeara 'Aisjijah* 16-8-1941

pharmacy and asks to send someone to pick up a prescription. At the bottom of the advertisement the doctor comments: "Well, what a coincidence that you have a telephone. Without a telephone this would have taken much more time." To the right of the image an anonymous narrator says that the woman happens to have a telephone, which was the reason why she was able to call the doctor when her child fell ill, and then call the pharmacy ("the medicine house") to pick up the prescription. Taken together, this demonstrates how quickly help for her child could be organised.

The magazine of the women's organisation of Muhammadiyah, *Soeara 'Aisjijah*, demonstrates how modernist Muslim women gave shape to modernity by distancing themselves from the conservative influences of both *adat* (local customs) and the dangers of Western decadence, personified by the image of the modern girl.[28] Like other magazines, *Soeara 'Aisjijah* emphasised the centrality of the household. Apart from a very ambivalent

28 *Soeara 'Aisjijah. Madjallah woelanan* (Yogyakarta: Moehammadijah, 1927).

Figure 11 Front yard

Source: Hella Haasse, *Bij de les: Schoolplaten van Nederlands-Indië* (Amsterdam and Antwerp: Uitgeverij Contact, 2004), 78-79

attitude towards polygamy, which was formally accepted but at the same time marginalised as much as possible, education for children and women was seen as an essential condition in order to participate in modern society.[29] Although we usually associate the wearing of the *jilbab* (headscarf) with post-1979 Indonesia, the two advertisements from *Soeara 'Aisjijah* indicate an early modelling of a "correct" presentation of the female self. The advertisements in *Soeara 'Aisjijah* therefore form an interesting contrast with the following Dutch-created images of women and school children, which are all shown in Western dress. Figures 9 and 10 show clearly that modernist Muslims made serious efforts to determine their own trajectory towards a distinct modern lifestyle.

Just like advertisements in which the iconic modern girl appeared, advertisements and articles in women's magazines formed in various ways a central tool for schooling consumers in the consumption and cultural practices

29 See also Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, "Marriage, morality and modernity: The 1937 debate on monogamy," in *Women and the Colonial State* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000), 187-218.

Figure 12 Back veranda

Source: Haasse, *Bij de les*, 76

of modernity.[30] Advertisements can, in this respect, be seen as a particular curriculum of an "education of desire". Similar examples can be found in a series of school posters which were used at the *Hollandsch-Inlandsche Scholen* (HIS, Dutch Native Schools) and the *Hollandsch-Chineesche Scholen* (HCS, Dutch Chinese Schools) to teach Dutch to indigenous and Chinese-Indonesian children. According to Dutch novelist Hella Haasse, the posters made by advertisement artist Frits van Bemmel represented an idealised reality, the Indies of progress that the ethical politicians dreamed of, which served as an image of the future for pupils to strive towards (figure 11).[31] The posters are given a cheerful radiance by the light colours used, without directly showing the unequal power relationships of the colonial regime.

The posters show a rosy image of the indigenous middle classes and emphasise the nuclear family as a cornerstone of society and bearer of stability, cleanliness and order. Again, father is reading the newspaper. And again, we see the family sitting together around the table on the back

30 See Weinbaum, *The Modern Girl Around the World*, 22.

31 Hella Haasse, *Bij de les: Schoolplaten van Nederlands-Indië* (Amsterdam/Antwerpen: Uitgeverij Contact, 2004), 7-8.

Figure 13 Post office and station

Source: Haasse, *Bij de les,* 82

veranda, with the backyard looking tidy and neat (figure 12). Servants in traditional dress, who are excluded from this middle-class vision of cultural citizenship, help to give these pictures a colonial flavour and arguably preserve the social hierarchies that this class of Indonesian benefits from.

If we walk into the street (figure 13) we see the apotheosis of modernity in which various means of transport and communication are at the service of the indigenous middle classes. Significantly, Europeans are virtually absent and we see a stylised world exclusively inhabited by cultural citizens sustaining the continuity of the colony.

As Rudolf Mrázek has rightly observed, "the classroom, more than anything, made one wish to look to a window; even a picture on the classroom wall made one wish that the picture were a window, a break in the wall".[32] If we try to imagine that these posters were such "windows in the wall", we see on the next poster how two Chinese school children looked at an imagined future as cultural citizens. It is the ultimate colonial order in which the Europeans are invisible, because the indigenous middle classes have internalised peace and order as qualities of their own (future) character.

32 Rudolf Mrázek, *A Certain Age: Colonial Jakarta Through the Memories of its Intellectuals* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010), xii.

Figure 14 Schoolmaster pays a visit to the parents of his pupils

Source: W. Stavast and G. Kok, *Ons eigen boek* (Groningen, The Hague and Weltevreden: J.B. Wolters, 1930), 26

The fact is, though, that most people still went barefoot, for the distinction from the absent Europeans should remain obvious.

A brief glance at school textbooks reveals that the posters were frequently reproduced in the curriculum. In the second volume of *Djalan ke Barat/Weg tot het Westen* (*The Way to the West*), for instance, we learn Dutch sentences about clothing, the household, traffic, the railway station, and so on. Among

Figure 15 Office of the archive of the Department of Interior, Batavia, 1933

Source: KITLV Image Collection, Image 36224

the various exercises is the story of the father who comes home from work at his office and changes his clothes. While mother serves tea, father lights a cigar. Then father changes clothes again, puts his hat on, takes his walking stick and goes to the shop.[33]

In another textbook the European schoolmaster pays a visit to the parents of a pupil whose father reads the newspaper. In the next scene (figure 14) mother serves lemonade, while father, who looks like the father on the posters, presents a cigar.[34]

33 H.P. van der Laak, *Djalan ke Barat/Weg tot het Westen* (Groningen and Weltevreden: J.B. Wolters, 1923), vol. 2.

34 W. Stavast and G. Kok, *Ons eigen boek* (Groningen, The Hague and Weltevreden: J.B. Wolters, 1930), vol. 3.

Figure 16 M. Ali, Man on a bicycle at Oude Tamarindelaan, Batavia, 1941

Source: Collection Dinas Tata Bangunan dan Pemugaran, Jakarta

Fragments of other sources

The advertisements and school posters show us prescribed and idealised ideas about modernity and cultural citizenship within a colonial context, but do not tell us anything about how contemporary life was *actually* experienced by members of the indigenous middle classes. It is my hypothesis that these images were of enormous appeal to the members of the lower middle classes in the colony, and helped them to formulate their own ideas about how they should participate in progress and modernity in their own daily lives.

An interesting problem is that, apart from advertisements and posters, the lower middle classes left few other visible traces. I doubt whether they wrote diaries, or possessed photo albums with family pictures, but the extant autobiographical images of elite families seem to support my claims.[35] In general, however, colonial photography was more interested

35 See Susie Protschky, "Tea cups, cameras and family life: Picturing domesticity in elite European and Javanese family photographs from the Netherlands Indies ca. 1900-1942," *History*

Figure 17 Visitors to Pasar Gambir, Batavia, 1930

Source: KITLV Image Collection, Image 16580

in documenting official cultural heritage like temples, dances and things labelled *adat*. A search for relevant images in the photo collection of KITLV – which contains 100,000 photos – had a modest result. There are a limited number of photos taken in offices, where we see middle-class employees at work (figure 15). For the rest we get glimpses of people, literally in passing, either on a bicycle (*the* vehicle of the cultural citizen) (figure 16), as bystanders, or anonymous visitors to the annual fair, Pasar Gambir, a large open space in the centre of Batavia which was used, among other things, for fairs (note the centrality of cigarettes) (figure 17).

Despite their marginal existence in colonial archives, the urban indigenous middle classes played a crucial role in sustaining the colonial regime. Robert van Niel has pointed to the fact that, in the 1920s, Dutch colonial policy aimed to make a deliberate distinction between the indigenous masses and the westernised middle classes. The so-called "native communities" had to be controlled through collective *adat* rule, whereas the rising middle class required a different approach. Access to the political domain was, of course, denied to them, and in judicial terms *all* indigenous

peoples were excluded from European law. However, the Indonesian middle classes were allowed to enter the Western *cultural* sphere.[36] Through efforts to incorporate the middle classes into colonial culture, or lifestyles, the indigenous cultural citizen was born.

Despite the invitation extended to indigenous middle classes by advertisements and school posters to become cultural citizens of the colony, the trajectory towards this new socio-cultural destination was not a smooth one. Members of the middle classes aspiring to participate in progress and modernity faced racial boundaries and uncertainty and confusion about the making of the new nuclear family. The rise of the indigenous middle classes was paralleled by a widening racial divide between themselves and the European ruling class. Two telling anecdotes from both sides of the divide show the extent to which apartheid was on the rise during the late-colonial period, while at the same time there was consensus about a shared point of concern.

The first example comes from the letters of the Dutch expatriate Kuyck family in Batavia. When they visited Pasar Gambir in September 1929 (see figure 17), they suddenly experienced the proximity of the rising new middle classes. On 1 October 1929 Mrs Kuyck wrote:

> It is remarkable how differently the natives behave lately. They are not hostile, but many of them consider themselves completely equal to the Europeans. At Pasar Gambir I watched with Wouter [her son] a wooden submarine with a real periscope … I happened to stand next to some natives and when it was our turn to look through the periscope, one of them said to my surprise in impeccable Dutch "You must lift the boy up, madam, he is too small to see anything." And another, who saw that I held a handkerchief in front of Wouter's face – because I found it a sickening idea that so many people before us had looked through the periscope – said; "Yes, madam, the glass is probably dirty." They were not rude at all but, mind you, in the past it would not have crossed the mind of a native to address a European woman. When we left we saw a couple of native women and men at the entrance. They looked so neat and civilised … When we walked by I heard, again to my big surprise, that they spoke Dutch among themselves. "Are you going to Kramat? Can we give you a ride?"[37]

36 Robert van Niel, *The Emergence of the Modern Indonesian Elite* (The Hague/Bandung: W. van Hoeve, 1960), 246-250.

37 Fridus Steijlen and Erik Willems, ed., *Met ons alles goed: Brieven en films uit Nederlands Indië van de familie Kuyck* (Zutphen/Leiden: Walburgpers/KITLV, 2008), 124 (my translation).

Since racial segregation increased during the closing years of Dutch colonial rule, the scene at Pasar Gambir shows that there were only a few places left where Europeans and the new cultural citizens could meet. Mrs Kuyk was amazed about the extent to which these "natives" had appropriated the Dutch language but she took for granted that they apparently shared a similar concern about hygiene.

From the other side of the divide the following observation was made in a Dutch-language article in *Bale Warti Wanito Oetomo* in 1938, signed by "Sk.". The author starts by referring to an article written by "Helen" in the *Mataram* journal. Because her *djongos* (houseboy) was not available, Helen had to go to the post office herself one day to send a money order. To her dismay she had to wait in a queue with natives behind and in front of her. She could not stand the smell of these people. Although she was willing to acknowledge that these natives were also human beings, she considered it an assault on European prestige to be so close to the dirty bodies of these people. Therefore she proposed to establish separate queues for natives and Europeans.

After reading this article Mrs Sk. was infuriated. European women, she argued, should realise that they also smelled unpleasant because of *their* heavy perspiration and consumption of cheese. The expensive silk dresses of these women also smelled because they could not be regularly cleaned. On the topic of civilisation, when friends of Mrs Sk. visited the Netherlands they were harassed by lower-class street kids, which would have been unthinkable in the Indies. The readers should therefore also learn from Helen's article, and admit that "we" actually lack cleanliness and hygiene! It was therefore "our" duty to care for the hygiene of our bodies and households. The derogatory term "dirty native" should not just be interpreted as an insult, but as a challenge to demonstrate the opposite. In the last part of her article – which, as it happens, was placed next to an advertisement for Camay soap, "used by millions of women in Europe and America" – Mrs Sk. expressed her gratitude for what the West had brought (hygiene, education, beautiful roads) but she reminded her readers not to imitate Western decadence.[38]

Modernity not only manifested itself in brightly-coloured new lifestyles but also caused doubt and confusion when it actually came to efforts to establish a nuclear family. These aspects have hardly been investigated and source material is scarce. Malay literature offers a few starting points. Well-known is the novel *Belenggu* by Armijn Pané, in which the story of

38 *Bale Warti Wanito Oetomo* 3-9-1938.

failed romantic relationships serves to reflect on modernity's failure to provide freedom.[39] The protagonists do free themselves of each other, but in the end they are irrevocably confronted with existential loneliness.

The isolated position of the individual in the modern world also plays a central role in cheap popular novels, which literati affiliated with the prestigious colonial publishing house Balai Poestaka looked down upon. Henk Maier has shown that this genre of fiction offers insights into the way writers tried to cross the dividing lines between various ethnic groups in society.[40] These novels often feature tragic affairs in which lovers cannot reach each other or lose each other again. Against the background of cinemas, restaurants, tennis courts and taxis, romantic relationships between people of different ethnic backgrounds inevitably run aground. At the same time the protagonists criticise Dutch arrogance, as well as the emptiness of nationalism and the excesses of modern life. For modernity implied abandoning old patterns and a precarious search for new forms. These novels therefore seem to show that the new nuclear family was not a guaranteed success formula for a modern life, because finding a new lifestyle proved to be a complicated and risky adventure.

Towards further questions

If we turn away from the teleological historiography of the nationalist success story, then, we get a much more complex view of the cultural dynamics of late-colonial society and the way in which the indigenous middle classes were interwoven with the colonial system. We may also see that nationalism was only one aspect of a much broader movement toward achieving modernity, which was instrumental in order to become cultural citizens of the colony.[41] It would also be interesting to investigate in more detail what role Indo-European and Chinese played in this context[42] – lines of inquiry

39 Armijn Pané, *Belenggu*, first published 1940 (Jakarta: Pustaka Rakjat, 1949).

40 Henk Maier, *Monsieur d'Amour. Maar geluk duurt nooit lang: Maleise verhalen vol bitterheid* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002).

41 Adrienne Huijzer, "Escaping Kartini: Indonesian women as agents in a changing colonial society, 1900-1942" (Masters diss., VU University Amsterdam, 2010).

42 When mentioning "Europeans" I refer to white immigrants from Europe. Indo-Europeans, or Eurasians, and, for that matter, (Indo-)Chinese are usually seen as the core groups of the colonial middle classes. I have left them out in this preliminary exploration because I wanted to highlight the role of the indigenous middle classes as cultural citizens. It is, however, important to investigate relationships between these groups and the extent to which the indigenous middle classes were influenced by Indo-European and (Indo-)Chinese styles.

Figure 18 Advertisement for Palmboom Margarine

Anih benar. Sandwich jang ini djauh lebih enak dari jang tadi.
Kebetulan! Akupun rasakan itu. Marilah kita menanjakan ke babnja pada Warti.
Margarineku kebetulan habis. Aku lalu pindjam dari tetanggaku. Ia kasihkan sekaleng dengan merek jang ia paling sukai: PALMBOOM.
O, begitukah? Betul sadja: rasanja PALMBOOM memang lezat benar!
Seterusnja aku tjuma akan beli "PALMBOOM"
Lezat nikmat dan sehat
Palmboom senantiasa menciptakan suatu hidangan istimewa. Margarine tulen berwarna kuning-emas ini meninggikan rasa asli dari tiap makanan dan membuat hidangan mendjadi hidangan pesta . . . . . ketjuali dari itu ia sungguh menjehatkan oleh karena kekajaannja akan vitamin' A dan D.
MARGARINE
Palmboom
BANJAK MENGANDUNG VITAMIN A & D
HASIL DARI DJAWA NAN INDAH
Palmboom
MARGARINE

Source: *Ipphos Report*, Jakarta, Ipphos Co. Ltd 5:13 (1953)

that Pamela Pattynama and Karen Strassler have begun to explore with reference to family and studio photography in this volume (Chapters Five and Seven).

Efforts to achieve modernity through adopting new lifestyles did not occur exclusively in the Netherlands Indies. Recent publications on other parts of Southeast Asia have opened avenues for further comparative research on the ways notions of modernity have been articulated in everyday life. In

Burma the appearance of modern women who looked very much like the "new modern girl" had several effects. It underlined a new autonomy for women by questioning existing gender identities, and it embodied efforts to modernise without simply imitating the West. However, nationalists depicted modern Burmese women as a threat to their cause because they acted as agents of capitalist consumerism.[43]

In Thailand things went in a different direction. At the end of the 1930s the military leader Phibum Songkhram forced a "Westernising behavioural revolution" upon Thai citizens by ordering them to wear Western clothing, sit on chairs, use forks and spoons, join clubs and applaud at shows. Men had to kiss their wives before going off to work, women were obliged to appear in public wearing hats and gloves, citizens should visit museum exhibitions to learn about modern art, and the legal system emphasised the importance of monogamous marriages.[44]

Whereas the Thai example illustrates the state's interest in fashioning modernity, research by the Indonesian historian Agus Suwignyo shows how members of the indigenous middle classes in the Netherlands Indies were the main actors whose ambition it was to become cultural citizens of the colony. They did not primarily focus on the nationalist case, but preferred instead a promising career within the colonial state. Many alumni of the *Hollandsch-Inlandsche Kweekschool* (Dutch Indies Teacher Training College) dreamed of upward mobility within the colonial system. They were taken by surprise by the sudden independence of Indonesia, which many people experienced as a breaking of the dam, causing turmoil *and* offering new opportunities for upward mobility.[45]

After the revolution middle-class Indonesians transformed from being cultural citizens to full citizens of the Indonesian nation. In an advertisement for Palmboom Margarine from 1953, we encounter some of them at a cocktail party, where men in suits enjoy drinks and sandwiches and listen to the radio, while the women, in traditional dress, discuss the superior quality of Palmboom Margarine (figure 18).

The advertisement resembles a series of snapshots, as though we were witnessing the cocktail party through the lens of a camera. In her recent

43 Chie Ikeya, "The modern Burmese woman and the politics of fashion in colonial Burma," *Journal of Asian Studies* 67 (2008): 1277-1308.

44 Craig Reynolds, ed., *National Identity and its Defenders: Thailand Today* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2002), 6-9; Tamara Loos, *Subject Siam: Family, Law, and Colonial Modernity in Thailand* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 2006).

45 Agus Suwignyo, "Education and the transition of regimes in Indonesia, 1900s-1960s" (paper presented at the Encompass Pilot Conference, Jakarta, 15-17 January 2008).

book on popular photography in Indonesia, Karen Strassler elaborates how individual Indonesians placed themselves, through photography, within a narrative of national modernity and thereby came to see themselves as Indonesians.[46] This was a process which, as we have seen, had its roots also in the advertisements and school posters of the late-colonial period.

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9 Say "cheese"

Images of captivity in Boven Digoel (1927-43)

Rudolf Mrázek

Introduction

Several prominent scholar-officials of the Netherlands Indies – the best known among them, B.J.O. Schrieke (1890-1945) – had been instrumental in the discussions about, process of creating and implementation of the overall principles of Boven Digoel, the prison camp for political dissidents that was established by the colonial regime in New Guinea. J.A.C. Dirk de Graeff (1872-1957, r. 1927-31), the last Governor-General connected with the Ethical Policy, oversaw Boven Digoel's beginnings. Two persons arguably most representative of the late "ethical" approach to governing the Indies, H.J. van Mook (1894-1965, r. 1942-48) and Charles O. van der Plas (1891-1977), authored probably the most often quoted comments about Boven Digoel, referring to it as a sort of ordinary Javanese village. There is no irony in this. Boven Digoel is a particularly impressive portrait of the calculated, Calvinist, blasé and soft nature of ethical Dutch rule in the Indies – say "cheese".

At the end of 1926 and in early 1927, out of desperation more than anything else, the Communists in the Netherlands Indies attempted a revolution. The Dutch colonial administration crushed the rebellion mercilessly and punished all those caught in action. Some – a few hundred at first, but ultimately close to five thousand[1] – of whom no direct action could be proven, only sympathy or intentions, were sent to a new, hastily built camp in New Guinea, the easternmost part of the colony. Legally married couples and their families could join the exiles if they so wished. These were not criminals – this was officially stated – and thus there needed to be no trials, and no time limit was set to the internment.

The purpose of the camp was to isolate a possible evil of disorder and extremism from well-behaved colonial society. The camp had been built at the edge of the empire and deep into the frontier island, up on the big Digoel River, still at that time three days by steamer from the sea – thus the name

1 Initially: "13,000 arrests followed, 4500 communists were sentenced to prison and 1300 were interned … in Boven Digoel": Harry A. Poeze, Introduction to *Politiek-politioneele overzichten van Nerderlandsch-Indië Deel I, 1927-1928*, ed. Harry A. Poeze (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), xliii.

of the camp was Boven (Upper) Digoel. The camp was in the middle of the endless forests inhabited by the Papua people, famed (happily emphasised by the guards and administrators of the camp) for being the most primitive, the wildest people on the earth, and cannibals.

This sounds medieval given that these were the *late*-colonial and *high*-modern times. Exactly because of the principle of isolation, a camp such as Boven Digoel, in the increasingly interconnected world of the twentieth century, became a key, a core, an epicentre, more than a fissure, an overcharged relay through which most if not all the currents of the modern – its ethics, its technology – had to squeeze and struggle. In the camp, the world (which seemingly had nothing in common with that faraway place) had been tested; captured in a snapshot.

There are boxes of papers from Boven Digoel – camp police reports, medical records, internees' petitions and letters, receipts – a shelf of about twelve metres long, stored in the National Archives in Jakarta. A few memoirs and fictional accounts of the life in the camp have been published. Some of us who came later still had an opportunity to listen to the survivors. As for the photographs, there are extremely few of them.

Black and white

Language is at the peak of its power when it is made into a caption. It takes upon itself the pictorial. Just words can convey "chiaroscuro", "brownish grey", "silky and glossy", or an "elegant half-tone". Words can say that this photograph is mournful or lighthearted. Language becomes powerful and assertive, crystal clear, during these games, especially if so much is at stake as in the camps. The logic of language articulates what we can see as sharply as grammar allows it. Grammar, the "*direct* expression of reason",[2] is frozen in the process. The aura of language and photography join most impressively in the ultimate contrast of black and white.

There are no colour photographs known from Boven Digoel, and not much of half-tint. All the photographs that we can still look at shun half-tints, are utterly black and white. The black-and-whiteness of the Boven Digoel photographs is clear, pure, logical, to the point and categorical.

There is one photograph in particular by Louis Johann Alexander Schoonheyt (1903-86), a camp medical officer and passionate photographer. It was taken probably in 1933 when the camp was in its sixth year. There is a

2 Michael Hofmann, ed., *Joseph Roth: A Life in Letters* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2012), 370.

little toddler in the centre. The boy is about one year old, cute, a son of the administrator of the camp, we learn from the caption, and he could not be more white: white kiddy dress, white chubby little legs, white face, white hands and pale eyes. Dr. Schoonheyt, in the picture too, holds the white boy and is all-white: face, of course, jacket, shirt, trousers, white shoes and blond. This would not be complete, utter and camplike, however. There are two Papuan men in the picture, the "people of the forest", *orang hutan*, *bosbewoners*.[3] In time many of them came to and remained in the camp as servants. These two have to be close to the white boy and man. They are black, they cannot be blacker as the doctor and the boy cannot be whiter. This is one of several reasons why Boven Digoel became such a photogenic place. The Papuans of Boven Digoel were *completely* black: the total way.

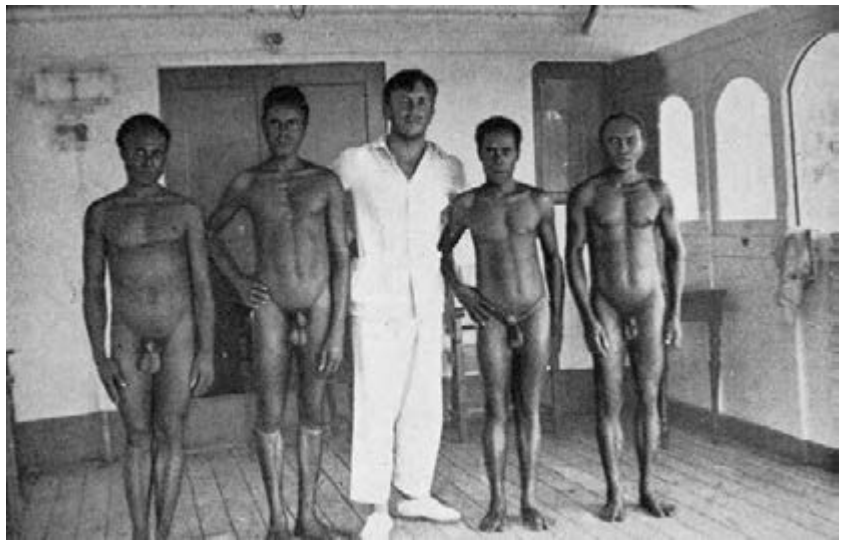
There are several photographs from Boven Digoel like that with the doctor and the toddler. It would seem impossible to get further than that, to a statement more sharp, explicit, frozen, black/white and categorical. But the possibilities were infinite, and here was the attraction of the game. In another photograph, most probably also by Dr. Schoonheyt, the doctor is on patrol with a small troop of soldiers, exploring the forest deeper from the camp. They are on a ship, a small government steamer, on the river, upstream. The ship is white (it actually was called *Kapal Putih*, "White Ship," by the internees), Dr. Schoonheyt is in a white colonial army doctor uniform, flanked by naked and black Papuans. The expedition seems to have been made for the sole purpose of taking the photograph. Dr. Schoonheyt and the ship are whiter beside the Papuans, and the Papuans are blacker beside the ship and Dr. Schoonheyt (figure 1).

The camp was surrounded by the darkness: this was the Boven Digoel photographs' statement. The background in the photographs is sometimes the forest, and it is just a tiny bit less black than the Papuans. When the first commandant of the camp, Captain Becking, conducted his own survey of the surrounding forest, he wrote in his report about a Papuan man he met:

> The white of the dog fangs around his neck and of the feathers in his hair, of his eyes and his white teeth, all comes to stand out against his dark

3 *Orang hutan* is Indonesian, see e.g. Tanpa Nama, *Minggat dari Digul, djilid IV: Daratan dan Sungai* (Solo: Boekhandel Soeleman, n.d.), 247-248; *bosbewoners* is Dutch, see e.g. I.F.M. Salim, *Vijftien jaar Boven-Digoel: Concentratiekamp in Nieuw-Guinea* (2nd enlarged ed.) (Hengelo: Smit van 1876, 1980), 309.

Figure 1 Photographer unknown, Dr. Schoonheyt on the River Digoel, March 1933



Source: KITLV Image Collection, Image 19045

> skin. These guys, when they adorn themselves, in all their beauty can pose for a "*study in black and white.*"[4]

Much of the forest was still untamed, like the people of it. Much of the forest and the people was still hidden. Dr. Schoonheyt with his camera eyes saw it: "their brown-to-black strong figures do form virtually no contrast with the colour of the trees and the forest".[5] Photography, however, worked on it. Its logic was making sure that the aura of black-and-white would make all the hidden come forth and be exposed on the scale of light.

The banal is as powerful as it is bare and zero-sum. It conquers whatever might be half-clear – shades or glimmers, whatever might be off in its own way. Nothing is recognised but by its closeness or distance to the black-and-white. Neutral is unacceptable, as are all the other "spaces without genre".[6]

4 L.Th. Becking, *Reisverslag van* [*kapitein L.Th.*] *Becking, gezaghebber te Boven-Digoel op zijn tourneé van de Digoel-rivier naar de Ok Terrie* (*Alice-rivier*) *van 3 tot en met 30 Juni j.l.* Tanah-Merah, 16 Juli 1927, typescript KITLV Special Collections, Leiden, inventaris 53 Collectie F.H. Peters, 1992.4, 11.

5 Louis Johan Alexander Schoonheyt, *Boven-Digoel: Het Land van Communisten en Kannibalen*, 2nd rev. ed. (Amsterdam and Batavia: G. Kolff, 1940), 35.

6 H. de Balzac, quoted in Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics* (Cambridge/New York: Semiotext(e) and MIT Press, 1986), 8.

In their beautiful essay, "What happens when you really listen" (it could be easily titled "What happens when you really look"), Pete Becker and Ronit Ricci quote the ancient Javanese *Ramayana*. The conquered and captive Ajodhya is described as a "city all covered and hidden under an ashy gray dome".[7] Ash is neutral, it is grey, off scale and without genre – certainly as far as conquerors are concerned. Yet there is not only endless sadness hidden in it, but also endless possibilities, "a remainder: underneath the neither-norish rhetoric".[8] One might see it if one really looked. The Boven Digoel camp black-and-white photographs, however, would have nothing of the ashy. They made it disappear. They had no pigment for it.

Frame

There were guards, as well as the dark and impenetrable forest around these people. There was almost no possibility of escape through or around all this. Very few escapes, indeed, were attempted, and even fewer succeeded. And equally close to impossible there was an escape from a photographic space in which they were captured. The frame of the pictures defined the forest, the end of light and the horizon – however far one might imagine going. Rather than a texture, there was a grid to the photographs which defined the camp around and through the captured people – their imprisonment as *enframing*. The very "beauty" of the photographs and their appeal to the sense of modern aesthetics was to be a guarantee that the camp and the people would stay. And indeed, Boven Digoel was a moment and place of *concentrated* modernity, and the modern sense of beauty culminated exactly in places like the New Guinea camp.

One thinks of European modern art of the early twentieth century as vibrant and daring. The work of Emil Nolde, a German Expressionist painter – the Nazis soon would call his art degenerate – serves as an example. I was lucky to find that Emil Nolde actually visited the German part of New Guinea just a little over a decade before the Boven Digoel camp had been set up. But he might be said to be painting the same wilderness, and the same modernity:

7 A.L. Becker and Ronit Ricci, "What happens when you really listen: On translating the Old Javanese *Ramayana Ramayana Kekawin*, *Sargah* 26, translation and essay," *Indonesia* 85 (April 2008): 1.

8 Roland Barthes, *The Neutral: Lecture Course at the Collège de France (1977-1978)* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 80.

> [The savages] were friendly … [I gestured to them to come out] and close, into a better light … Just a few metres from me the biggest and prettiest of the guys stood. I tried to get him still closer but he would not move. Erect, with a spear in his hand, he watched me. I drew and I painted. To the right I have placed my revolver with the safety catch off, and my wife with her pistol, also unlocked, covered my back. Never before perhaps [has] a painter worked under such suspense …[9]

Perhaps so. Perhaps never before had the vibrancy and daring of contemporary culture come closer to breaking a frame and crushing the grid to let other values emerge – like understanding. Emil Nolde was such a great painter, and the Papuan whom Nolde drew and painted was such a "pretty guy". Yet, the German revolver Expressionist and the naked Papuan with a spear in his hand previewed and belonged to the way of seeing the Boven Digoel culture of enframing completely. Inevitably, too, as Nolde drew and painted the savage in the frame, as he drew and painted the grid, it could not be done other than as a "study in black and white":

> My paints just flowed over the paper as the moment and the will dictated it to them … In the beginning there were just light lines suggesting a face, and the face was coming into light – light as we the white people understand it. But then, as I started to add some shadows, and as the face's expression became darker and darker, then the face began to radiate …[10]

The best in modernism pointed the way. The internees in Boven Digoel, between white and black, between primitive and modern, were framed and gridded – the more attractive the image, the more closely so. To "escalate the intensity" of seeing and imagining, it meant to keep the people more tightly inside the frame. Empowering the frame, the grid was equally modern and as such equally convincing – its "apparent neutrality", "indifference to topography", "claiming the superiority of mental construction over reality", "subjugating if not obliterating … nature as its true ambition", subjecting the people and nature to "two-dimensional discipline".[11]

9 Emil Nolde, *Mein Leben* (Köln: DuMont Buchverlag, 1976), 280.

10 Ibid., 280.

11 Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1994), 15, 20, 85.

Exposure

Boven Digoel lay deep in the New Guinea forest. There was dark forest all around.

> The trees in the Digoel area can reach a height of 80 to 100 metres. Their crowns touch and grow into each other so that they form one thick roof of branches and leaves over all the forest. Nearly no light of the sun gets through. There is always twilight to night in the forest.[12]

The people of the forest had dark skins, blacker even than Africans, as had often been said by guards, internees and visitors to the camp as well. This was darkness hard to capture with the naked eye, because of the wall of the dark forest all around. The cameras in the camp, also, did not have the technology yet to make them more sensitive to light than eyes. The only way to photograph the people, or the forest, was to lure the people and also the forest – all that was of the forest, trees, flowers, birds and other animals, ghosts – out of darkness into light; that kind of *montage*. The way in which photography could work was to enlighten the subject.

This also made the camp symptomatic of our time. Photography marked the progress of subjects from darkness to light, and the camps like Boven Digoel were the experimental fields, the ateliers of that progress. From the camp spread the light. From the camp, at the edge of the modern world, darkness was frontally confronted. Photography proved that this was the way the camp had been conceived in the first place, and how it functioned – as a clearing.

> Soon, a few [savages] and after them more and then even more were coming out, closer, to take a peek from behind the trees at first, a constant "*va et vien*" of them – curious.[13]

The dark people of the forest had been lured into light, and as they came out they carried the forest with them – birds, pigs, flowers. Then they could be seen, and cameras could make pictures of them. They became exposed, and more, they became lucid. *Camera Lucida* was made a perfect term by Roland Barthes for the technique and the ethics of the place.

12 Salim, *Vijftien jaar Boven-Digoel,* 315, verbatim from Schoonheyt, *Boven-Digoel,* 227.
13 Schoonheyt, *Boven-Digoel*, 262.

The camp at the edge of empire and of modernity, in the forest – or more precisely the photographer, the camera, and the subject in the camp – became a spot where the light of the world converged. But it was not the clearing, *die Lichtung*, of the kind that philosopher Martin Heidegger was writing about – not a clearing in forest (Heidegger used forest as a metaphor) where the light is let in as a "fourfold": a life-giving force of will, power and harmony of water, earth, sun (or gods) and humans. The clearing of the Boven Digoel camp was an epiphany of that kind. It was a forest destroyed, a place sun-beaten, without a single shadow, barren and flat.

> [I found in the place] only a very thin layer of arable earth … Roots of trees were to be seen all around that could not bore themselves down into the earth and so lay sprawled far and wide upon the surface of the hard clay. After the forest had been cleared for the camp, soon also the trees that were left standing [for shadow] could not make it by their own force anymore against the gusts of wind and they fell, too. All that one could see still standing at the edge of the forest were ghastly-deformed trunks.[14]

It would be an error to miss the profundity of the statement the camp was making. This was a fully and proudly man-made space. One of the tree trunks, a straight one, had been cut down and then erected in the centre of the camp. It was cleaned and impregnated with diesel oil, and made into a pole on which a Dutch national flag, "in a little moving ceremony", had been raised. The space around the pole was windswept, and, to add to this, there was regular and devastating flooding of the camp.

> Cattle cannot survive here. All the domestic animals they have brought in here look pitiful. That little bit of grass that grows in the place is good for nothing.[15]

Gloriously – viz. the flag – light had been let in at the edge of darkness. As this was a concentration camp (the term had been often used for Boven Digoel even by the authorities before it was brought into disrepute by Nazi practices), logically, it was a place of concentrated light, or rather a searchlight, and as sharp on the eyes as that. Only the most strong-willed in nature and among the humans might be able to stand the light and look

14 M. van Blankenstein, "Het verbanningsoord aan den Boven Digoel," *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant*, 8 September 1928.

15 Blankenstein, "Het verbanningsoord".

as they did before the light hit them. Nature, human and beyond, became virtually one with the light, and much as the light wanted it to be. Most of the humans would be blinded if they tried to face the light head on, eyeball to eyeball. Whatever and whoever might emerge from the darkness to light was not supposed to shine by its own light anymore. The enlightened ones were supposed to see nothing but the light as it was coming to them. They were supposed, without mercy, to be dazzled.

One of the photographs from an area close to Boven Digoel captures a group of Papuan children, boys of about ten, with a prominent white-clay painting on their black faces, wide circles around their eyes. The faces look to me as though they were wearing the goggles that workers or soldiers use to protect themselves against dust, water or glare. The caption under the photograph says – indeed – that this is war painting; "the boys", the caption says, "are painted for the kill."[16] Other faces of the people of the Boven Digoel forest in the photographs can be masked, and we know this, of course, from many other places. The other faces facing a photographer, and the light, those who had neither painted their faces nor covered them with a mask, seem in most cases to resort – if not to a "say-cheese" smile – to a blank look.

A full chain of beings were lured into the light of the clearing – from the Papuans, and trees, flowers and animals, to the guards and administrators in the camp, and also the internees. The internees, between white and black, were modern people. They might put a mask on, make a blank face ("*Besides-the-point answers | … | Departures, Flights, Silences, Forgettings*"[17]), some may say "cheese", but most of them grinned like one grins looking into the sun. It is not easy, when one looks through the Boven Digoel photographs, to find many cases of the face of an internee looking into the eye of camera unchanged, not grimacing, completely undaunted by the light – not making a face.

There seems to be one case. It seems to be the right one – this particular internee in this particular photograph is the former chairman of the Communist Party, Aliarcham, one of the "incorrigibles" or "principled" – so they were called by their fellow internees and by the guards as well. Aliarcham here faces the camera, and his eyes remain open into light. But this is a photograph of a dead man. He died of tuberculosis in the camp, and this is a picture taken just before he was buried.

16 J. Boelaars, *Mandobo's tussen Digoel en de Kao: Bijdragen tot een etnografie* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1970), 240.

17 Barthes, *The Neutral*, 109.

Figure 2 Photographer unknown (internee of Boven Digoel), Grave of Aliarcham, 1933

Source: Louis Johan Alexander Schoonheyt, *Boven-Digoel: Het Land van Communisten en Kannibalen*, 2nd rev. ed. (Amsterdam and Batavia: G. Kolff, 1940)

And, yes, speaking of the chain of beings, there is another photograph of very much the same sort. It was actually taken at Aliarcham's grave and a very short time, probably just a few hours, later. There is a sickle-and-hammer emblem clearly visible on the grave. But the *punctum* (viz. Barthes) of the photograph for me is elsewhere.[18] Next to the grave sits a huge dog, a hunting dog, looking into the light, head on, eyes wide open, facing the camera, as if that thing meant less than little to him (figure 2).

Camera

Unlike the telephone, and much more than television or radio, the camera is narrowly a means of one-way communication. The camera is a means of straight one-way seeing, exposing, explaining and shedding light.

At the time of the camp, there were only a few cameras on the huge island of New Guinea, incomparably less than in the modern West, and

18 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, first published 1980 (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), 27, 28, 32, 51, 55.

still much less even than in the westernised, "more advanced" regions of the Netherlands Indies. A camera in Boven Digoel was extremely rare, a thing, tool and sign from a very long distance.

> … a small troop of Kaja-Kaja [this is what the Papuans were called in Boven Digoel] are marching in a single file, carrying my luggage … Each of them is carrying one piece of luggage, and it does not matter if the luggage is very small or very large. The last two in line walk, one with my Chinese umbrella and the other with my reserve camera.[19]

Those people who owned a camera in or around the camp had possibly seen the modern and avant-garde photographs of Europe, America – the works of people like László Moholy-Nagy, Imre Kertész, Alexander Rodchenko or Joris Ivens had been published also in the Indies magazines of the time. This photography was known – the deliberate blurring of focus, shooting from unusual angles and vantage points, refraction, interlocking the foreground and the distant, refracting planes, recomposing forms and perspectives. None of this, however, seemed to be needed or desirable in the camp.

For the most skilled photographers in the camp, the click of the camera was what seemed to matter most. Roland Barthes was also excited by the sound of the camera shutter clicking. It was to him a pleasure, a sensual sign of the camera at work.[20] In the camp, however, for the photographic community, the click of the eye opening and shutting rather came like a well-aimed shot, frozen in time, the beginning and the end of statements following each other in an instant, without a moment to ask. French anthropologist Marc Augé wrote about a particular photograph of 1930s Paris. There was a "strange value" in the photograph, Augé wrote – a figure of a man out of focus that, caught as if by accident, "hurries out of frame". It is clear that in the next moment it will disappear beyond the frame. According to Augé, images like this make us aware of limitations in our power to catch the world as it is. Moments like this are humanising moments. They "indicate what we cannot grasp in the image".[21]

Exactly this would be a no-go for the photographer in the camp. The modern and the avant-garde in photography, by the way, did not become

19 Aage Krarup Nielsen, *In het land van kannibalen en paradijsvogels* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1930), 142.

20 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 15.

21 Augé commenting on the image in his edition of *Paris années trente: Roger-Viollet*, quoted in Marc Augé, *In the Metro* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 17.

the mainstream, even in the free world at large. Immense energy was spent to the opposite effect, to evade the moments when a subject was (almost) getting away. More so in the camp, the art and technique of seeing and imagining was cultivated, uncompromisingly, so as to blur as little as possible (high definition would be the perfect term if they had only known it then) – as little as possible of a person and perspective shifting and uncertainty; as little questioning as possible of a single, given and solidly established vantage point.

The crucial part of this enterprise – as of almost everything in the culture of the time and since then – was speed. Correct exposition was in good speed. Even in the camp at that time, there were already camera shutters that could open and shut in 1/250th of a second. Not yet – but they were almost there – might a savage's spear be caught in flight. The camp photographers were well equipped, and they took care to use the equipment to its limits. They aspired to the snapshot, not an event.

The camera empowered whoever held it in their hand in a way that the eye could not; technological rationale, at least, left no doubt about it. The camera could do much better than the eye's natural and simply human power to "fix a look". Gazing at something simply with a naked eye, it was found out, the "fixity"

> can last not much longer than a second without serious risk … [make it a second longer and humans] fall into hypnotic ecstasy or into some other analogous pathological condition …[22]

The camera was precious, and especially in places like the camp, because of this capacity to fix an instant, and for longevity – certainly, in this case, for the duration of the camp and as far into the future as the memory of the camp might last. The camera in the camp might be able to stop a subject, however he or she might try to blur or hurry out of the frame. The camera could produce the subject distinct and *in situ*. The camera could click more effectively – impressively – than the guards in the camp might ever shout their "Stop!" or "Quiet!". The camera could make the people in the camp halt in whatever they happened to be doing at the moment – having a rest, thinking of freedom, moving, sporting (figure 3).

Taking a picture in this manner, of course, holding a camera in hand like this, like a gun with the safety catch off, one of course is advised to

22 Dr. Abraham Wolf is quoted in Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance* (Cambridge and New York: Semiotext(e), 2009), 62.

Figure 3 Photographer unknown (internee of Boven Digoel), Boxing in the camp, c. 1930

Source: Schoonheyt, *Boven-Digoel*

keep on aiming, not to wink, and especially cover one's back, not to turn around. ("This is not I-am-a-camera stuff. This was the camera as weapon, when weapons were hard to find.")[23] One should take care to be the only one who is aiming at the moment. A photograph that I like to see and show whenever I get a chance was taken not in the Boven Digoel camp directly but in a forest clearing nearby. This picture tells all about the danger. The photographer – an anthropologist shooting a Papuan – did not cover his back. The perspective got crooked. The vantage point did not rest anymore solely in the man with the camera. The face of authority became the butt of a joke. If only the Kaja-Kaja savages might ever see it (figure 4)![24]

23 Peter Robb, *Midnight in Sicily* (New York: Picador, 1996), 217.

24 "Our doctor makes anthropological photos," in Jan van Eechoud, *Met Kapmes en Kompas door Nieuw-Guinea* (Amsterdam: C. de Boer, 1953), 161.

Figure 4 Photographer unknown, "Our doctor takes anthropological photos", 1940s

Source: Jan van Eechoud, *Met Kapmes en Kompas door Nieuw-Guinea* (Amsterdam: C. de Boer, 1953)

Market

Some are very intent – and I am one of them – on arguing that the ownership of the means of production more or less directly decides everything. Everything, photography included, ultimately gets its value on the market. The New York City homeless man, who was made famous by the Jacob Riis 1890s classic, asked the author a price of one cent to be photographed as he was. With a pipe in his mouth it was 1¼ US cents.[25] In Boven Digoel many photographs, and perhaps most, survived like that. They had been conceived as a commodity and, if there was any fortune in it, they were sold. Much of what we have come to know today of what happened in the camp appears as if it had happened in postcard size. The camp was framed as a souvenir, and it carried a price tag on its memory. Sailors on the ship that came with letters and supplies to the camp about once every six weeks,

25 Jacob A. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, first published 1890 (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 64.

some journalists and other visitors, administrators, guards, as well as the internees themselves, sending postcards home or, when it happened, leaving the camp, are reported to have been eager customers and to have paid a good price.

Picture postcards are known in nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonial culture everywhere – the proud images of Western achievements, railroads, bridges, refineries, ports and ships, subjects picturesque, hot and exotic. The nature and people of New Guinea would be highly prized in this sense even if no camp were there – the black, strong and naked Papuan men with their elaborate *peniskokers*, "penis sheaths",[26] the women with piglets at one breast and baby at the other,[27] or "pretty snapshots of [the Papuan] ladies 'like steamers sucking at their bamboo pipes'".[28] Many of the images of Papua and Boven Digoel survive to our age as postcards.

Such photographs had been taken everywhere in the colonies (or in slums of the New York City, for that matter). In the camps, however, the mode of production, again, was concentrated. The camp was an outpost in the primeval forest, and at the edge of empire. It was a clearing, a dazzling stage, and the props were sharp and distinct to see whenever they were in use. There is one picture postcard truly Wagnerian in that sense. A very old Papuan man (he might be a brother of the bum from New York with his pipe) stands as if on stage and with the props carefully arranged for the camera. This photograph in particular seems to have been very popular at the time of the camp, and it clearly made some money. It has been reproduced several times, including in Dr. Schoonheyt's memoirs of the camp.

> Especially in the south of our island, but to some extent everywhere in New Guinea, individuals could be found [among the Papuans] with striking Semitic features. In Merauke [the town closest to the camp, as well as the base of the Catholic priests who also worked there], people at the Mission have taken a photo of one such type. They clothed him in black trousers and a knee-length coat; they placed a bowler hat on top of his head and they put a walking stick in his hand. The caption read "The Wandering Jew". A pretty remarkable shot![29]

26 Boelaars, *Mandobo's tussen Digoel en de Kao*, 145.
27 Schoonheyt, *Boven-Digoel*, 130.
28 Ibid., 114; the photo is on page 113.
29 Jan van Eechoud, *Vergeten aarde* (Amsterdam: C. de Boer, 1951), 77.

A dictum about the far-reaching importance of the ownership of the means of production, also, appeared to work in the camp. As far as photography was concerned, it helps us to see that not all internees – the rebels, the Communists, cadres or sympathisers – were proletarians. There were internee-photographers in the camp, like there were internee (little sidewalk) shop-owners, launderers, barbers or tailors. These were internees who *owned* photographic shops and photographic equipment, the chemicals, the painted backdrops, the dark rooms, and also the cameras.

> Tanah Merah [Boven Digoel], 15 August 1938.
> *To the Esteemed Head of the Administration in Boven Digoel.*
> I, Soedihiat, internee no. 818, respectfully ask the Esteemed Sir for permission (and a card) to work on the [camp] market as a buyer and seller of second-hand goods, and as a photographer. I attach my photo to be put on the card. Thank you.
> Most respectfully.
> [Signed] Soedihiat.[30]

To all evidence, no internees owned the little modern and fast kind of camera that some of the Dutch administrators in the camp and foreign visitors did. A speed even close to 1/250th of a second was not available to the captives. This is certainly one reason why the photographs they left us are exclusively staged portraits and landscapes, and most often with nature and people looking as if frozen.

Theoretically, they might have turned their cameras in whatever direction they wished except against the sun. Even against their captors. But here, among other things, the rule and culture of ownership worked well. The internees were owners. Even if revolutionary at the moment of photography, theirs was no more than a cultural and photographic revolution. At the moment of conceiving a photograph and taking a picture, they were principally – however good they were at it – practitioners of the art. They – yes, they and their cameras were way too clumsy for it anyway – did not point their cameras in awkward angles, meticulously try to avoid any blur, make everything as distinct as possible, the perspective clear and simple, and all, even the tiniest parts of the world faced by a photographer, had to be securely inside the frame. The internees permitted themselves and their cameras a step aside even less than the whites in the camp did with

30 *Arsip Boven Digoel* (ANRI, National Archives of the Indonesian Republic, Jakarta), no. 303.

their shiny and tiny Leica machines. The world pictured by the internees sat solidly and moved even less.

The subjects in the photographs by the internees were – if possible – even more colonial than those taken by Europeans. The internees were higher on the scale and closer to the whites than the wild Papuans. As photographers, they did not take furtive peeks from among the trees, out of the forest at the clearing of the camp. They owned their cameras and they possessed the skill to handle them. Still, there is not a single photograph, as far as I know, that was taken by an internee of a guard, soldier or administrator. The photo gun was never turned that way. On the contrary, under the spell of the same colonial, modern and photographic culture, to prove the same axiom, following the same perspective, the Papuans were the favourite subjects for photography by the internees. To snap a shot of the Papuans was empowering for both the captives and the captors. It also paid well.

> We had small-shop owners [in the camp], mainly grocers, bakers and barbers, tailors, shoemakers and photographers. The photographers in particular were doing well. They made good profits … [the photographs] were sold for good money … also to us, the internees; we were good clients of the photographers. … There were photographs for sale everywhere in the camp, pictures of life in the settlement and in the camp's immediate surroundings. Foremost, the photographs of the Papuans were in a great demand, … sailors and journalists [when they came] also bought these pictures eagerly.[31]

The internees in Boven Digoel could find some use for their money. They were permitted to spend it in the camp, and also to order clothes, books and other items from the outside world, even from Europe. Some money could also be made when an internee sent a photograph to an Indies newspaper. Some of these we also still have, or, at least, their description.

> In number 3 [of Moestika, 6 May 1933], several photographs of Digoel internees appeared as well as a picture of [internee] A.Ch.L. Salim, the youngest brother of Hadji Agoes Salim. A letter by Salim is used as a caption … "Day after day moves into night. Months and seasons follow one after the other …"[32]

31 Salim, *Vijftien jaar Boven-Digoel*, 221.

32 *Overzicht van de Inlandsche en Maleisch-Chineesche Pers* [IPO] (Weltevreden, Batavia: Kantoor voor de Volkslectuur, 1933).

These photographs are of people in captivity, but they are also exemplary money-wise and black-and-white-wise. "On this particular photo", the newspaper editor commented,

> … there is also a Papuan [next to A.Ch.L. Salim], in a complete and stark state of nature … this to demonstrate to the reader the forest, the space that surrounds the internees' lives.[33]

Another of the Boven Digoel photographs is of the same genre and mood. It might be alright to call it grisly, but to call it culturally correct and market-savvy is more to the point. This photograph is the best of its kind in that sense. The particular savage in the picture does not smile, grin or "say 'cheese'", he does not have a blank look on his face: he does not have a face or head at all. Yet, otherwise there is everything in the picture that should be there to make it close to perfect. There is a frame and grid, and there is a pose. There is a stage and prop – the stretcher on which the headless Papuan lies distinctly show the letters *WHZ*, *Wilhelmina Ziekenhuis*, "The [Queen] Wilhelmina Hospital", the name of the camp hospital. The photograph of the headless Papuan is of the modern age and of the camp (of modern care, too, meaning "ethical care").[34]

The photograph of the headless Papuan was of postcard size, and it "went viral" in the camp and far beyond. In this case, we know from several police reports in the camp that it was an internee who took the picture.

> *Friday, 22 January 1937*
> … About an hour's walk westwards, beyond the camp football field of the *SH* [*Sutji Hati*, "Pure Heart," an internees' sports club], two bodies of Kaja-Kaja [Papuans] had been found, their heads cut off and their bodies with many wounds by spears and arrows. After the inspection of the bodies, photographs were taken and the other Papuans were ordered to put the two corpses in the earth.[35]
>
> *Sunday, 24 January 1937: 6:47 am*

33 Moestika, 6 May 1933, excerpted in *Overzicht van de Inlandsche en Maleisch-Chineesche Pers*.

34 Schoonheyt, *Boven*-Digoel, 246-247.

35 "Dagboek v/d Politie i/h Interneeringskamp," Friday, 22 January 1937, in *Arsip Boven Digoel*, no. 212.

> A telephone message from the Commandant: do inform H. Djoenaédi [internee no. 34] that he is not supposed to be selling the photographs of the corpses of the Kaja-Kaja that he had taken during the inspection of the dead Kowèng and Manadoen [two days ago]. The message was conveyed to H. Djoenaédi. He answered, however, that he had already sold quite a few prints of these pictures. He also said that he had taken the photographs exactly for the purpose of selling them. This has been conveyed back by telephone to the Commandant.[36]

A few weeks later, we learn again from a police report that – on order from the highest authority in Ambon, Moluccas Residency – the Commandant of the camp contacted the internee Djoenaédi again. This time he asked to buy from him the headless-Papuan postcards – and in bulk.

> *Wednesday, 13 May 1937 ... 7:55 pm*
> Maliki [a camp policeman on duty] leaves the station to ask H. Djoenaédi if he has ready the 12 pieces of the photos of the Kaja-Kaja killed (beheaded) in February (2 Kaja-Kaja, 6 prints of photographs of each of the two; telephone message from the Commandant as ordered by His Excellency the Resident). H. Djoenaédi admits that he has promised the photographs would be ready at 4 pm, but they are still wet. This is reported to the Commandant.[37]

No doubt there was a camera boom through the best and worst times of the Boven Digoel camp. Often, the internees took on costumes and props themselves, stepped on the stage and posed for the cameras of their fellow captives. The postcard, *De jeugdvoetbalclub VOGEL* (The young footballers' club BIRD), shows a group of young internees and their children in the club's sports uniforms. They stand in three lines, arranged for the camera, the goalkeeper in the middle holding a blackboard with (in English) "Till we meet again".[38] There are photographs, strikingly equal in picturesqueness and orderliness, of groups (teams? clubs?) of naked Papuans with spears and bows.

Hardly anything can show – and be – a camp and a colony as convincingly and essentially as a photograph. The props and stage are lively and the propped people are fixed on the lively stage. A statement by the props is

36 Ibid., 24 January 1937.
37 Ibid., Wednesday, 13 May 1937.
38 Schoonheyt, *Boven-Digoel*, 187.

complete and the stage is all-embracing. Next to the savages, one can see the internees doing it to themselves – in a *wayang orang* attire, with a "native" or "traditional" *kris* (dagger) in hand posing *as if* in rage or *as if* in meditation. In another snapshot of the time, two other internees costumed in just a loincloth stay frozen for the camera to click, in an "ancient", "martial" *pentjak* figure, *as if* poised, *as if* they were about to fly in fury, inside the frame.

This seemed as much of an action as the camera would permit. Much of the colonial and modern (photo) empire and (photo) market was granted to the captive people. It is not easy to say it – the more of the empire and market they were granted, the more captive they became; certainly not less. The internees could expose a subject of their (limited) choice. They could get behind their cameras, and they could make their cameras click. Among all the Boven Digoel photographs I did not find a single (photographic) sign of resistance. Not a suggestion, a joke, not even a kind of helpless Dadaist grimace that would give at least some expression to the horror of people being kept in cage.

Well, yes. There is one photograph, a postcard again, that might perhaps have caused some discomfort, at least in the camp. This is the image, again, of the grave of Aliarcham, the Communist leader who died in the camp. Dr. Schoonheyt described the event, and we should recall that he was a passionate photographer himself:

> During [Aliarcham's] funeral, which was attended by several hundred persons, all sorts of undesirable demonstrations were taking place already before the dead was laid to rest in a roofed grave. Upon the grave, the sign of a sickle and hammer was placed, very clearly visible. One could not disobey the government better than that. But this all was merely child's play compared with the impertinence with which the internees came up afterwards. They took a photo of the grave … and they started to offer it for sale throughout the camp. Several of these internees demonstrating in this way even dared to come to my house and offer me the photograph. In no uncertain words, I told them to move on "as fast as they can", just keep marching on past my house – which also was what happened. (It amazed me and I could not understand it, how the government could have allowed this photo to be distributed at all.)[39]

39 Ibid., 178.

A good story, I would say. It pleases every old (and young) rebel's heart. It has only to be added that Dr. Schoonheyt – probably unable to resist the temptation to have such a valuable piece of photography – bought the photograph of the Aliarcham's grave in the end. He also reproduced it in his book, and this is why we have it for posterity.

Sentimental turn

Often one only knows about a photograph from people who have seen it. There are still letters around, not many, sent by the internees in Boven Digoel to their families and friends, and letters the internees received back in the camp. Many mention photographs.

> *Djatinegara, 5 March 1937*
> Dear father and mother.
> In this letter I answer yours of 2 February 1937. In it, I also received the photo. Greetings from uncles H. Kopiah and H. Ilchias[?].
> Your son Abdulchalim.[40]

A letter, from a young woman in west Sumatra sent to her grandfather in Boven Digoel, which ended up in the Jakarta archives, probably confiscated by the censor. It contains the "usual" news – about an impending marriage, and the granddaughter does not want it, about health, illnesses and deaths among family and friends. It is clear from the letter that a school graduation picture had been attached to the letter. The photo is not there and neither is the envelope; only one page of the young woman's handwriting. All the students in the missing photograph, however, are carefully listed in the letter, and it takes a large part of the one page – numbers after each name, with evidently the corresponding numbers written on the photograph above each student's head.[41]

There was censorship in the camp of the incoming and outgoing mail, of course, and images were censored as well. There is a report of a whole roll of film being confiscated and destroyed by the authorities after a journalist who had got permission to see the camp allegedly tried to capture the everyday life of the place.[42] Worse than all the censorship and confiscation,

40 *Arsip Boven Digoel*, no. 305.
41 Ibid., no. missing.
42 Nielsen, *In het land van kannibalen*, 91.

however, was that time passed. The time that passed was long and mostly a very bad time, for the internees who made it out of the camp and for the photographs as well. The Pacific War and the Japanese occupation of the Netherlands Indies followed in a steady sequence, storm after storm and wave after wave. Some photographs had to be packed in a great hurry and not enough care could be given to them. Many were left where they were as the people of the camp moved and were moved, herded from place to place. Many photographs were burned or otherwise disposed of, so that nobody would know that there might be the people of Digoel nearby.

Even if nothing especially cruel and poisonous happened, it would be difficult for the internees as they left the camp to reintegrate into life at large. Some internees were let out gradually, through the 1930s. In 1943 the camp was disbanded as the Japanese army approached New Guinea. All the remaining internees were transported to Australia. After the war most of them returned to Indonesia. Wherever and whenever they arrived back to Indonesia they remained suspicious to many, even to their families and neighbours. They carried a stigma, and for only a small and insignificant few they were martyrs or heroes. They were (ex-)communists and (ex-)rebels, people dangerous to law and order – as it turned out, to the postcolonial and independent Indonesian nationalist and Islamist law and order as much as to the colonial law and order before. Many died a violent death *tidak diketahui di mana kuburnya*, "where their grave is not known".[43] Some prominent former Digoel internees were killed in the so-called Madiun Affair in 1948, and the ultra-right regime of General Suharto, which came out victoriously from the events of 1965 and 1966, put many of them back in prisons and camps again – often for years, many for more than a decade. The best-known place of the new captivity – and I have talked to several ex-Digoelists who were kept there – was on the island of Buru, halfway between Java and New Guinea. It was much worse in Buru, I was told.

Photographs, when we become really serious about them, are just pieces of paper that become brittle with age – less so in our affluent Europe and America, more often in the poor and humid tropics. Most of the Boven Digoel photographs would die a natural death, even had they not been lost in time, or burned, dumped, hidden and never recovered, as the war, revolution, police, mob – history – happened to drop by. Mrs Widayasih, who spent her childhood and early teen years in Boven Digoel, told me how her father, an ex-Digoelist and "stubborn like a horse," in the fall of 1965 had

43 Interview with ex-Digoelist Abdul Aziz, 20 May 2003, in Koesalah Soebagyo Toer, ed., *Tanah Merah Yang Merah: Sebuah Catatan Sejarah* (Bandung: Ultimus, 2010), 47.

fought with her, as old fathers do. A "crowd of neighbours" could be heard, she said, coming down their street and closer to the house, looking for communists. Here in Jakarta. She, of course, wished to get rid of everything that might betray the family Digoel connection – newspapers, photographs. He was fighting for every piece of paper. She had her way in the end and, no matter how hard the old man kicked, she made "a little pyre" in the backyard just in time. There went my sources.

Paper turns into ash. The old people, and now more and more their children and grandchildren, as I ask for photographs, just laugh – nothing, no photographs, of course, neither of themselves, nor of their parents, nor of anyone of the past; no documents, birth certificates, marriage licenses, school reports, letters, postcards, nothing. Few of the people formerly of Digoel still live, and fewer are strong and well-off enough that they can afford "a nostalgic tour". But some did it. They visited the former site of the camp. They found concrete foundations of one or two administrative buildings (the internees' houses just had floors of hardened earth). One of the old men who went found a mortar on which his father had hulled rice. It was his job, the man told me. He made a little money on it when in the camp. Did he take it with him back to Jakarta, I asked. One talks silly at a moment like that. "It was heavy, made of hard stone, you know, mortar." It is still there, he said; it will sink in the earth there, one day.

Even when some photographs, like some people, made it beyond the camp, how far and in what way did they survive? A Jewish woman in Jerusalem told a scholar asking about the Holocaust how she disliked the word. We were not survivors, she said; "we were not saved".[44] Of one crucial moment in history the photographs like those of Boven Digoel might teach us – a moment of *Vernichtung*, the Jerusalem woman might say, annihilation, changing what matters into ash.

A minor French painter of the late seventeenth century is said to have believed:

> the foreground of a picture is always repugnant and … the interest of an artwork must be seen in the distance, in the unfathomable realm which is the refuge of lies, of those dreams caught in the act, which are the only things men love.[45]

44 Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* (New York: Henry Holt and Company), 452-453.

45 Claude Lorrain (1600-82), quoted in Louis-Ferdinand Céline, *Journey to the End of the Night* (New York: New Directions Books, 2006), 67.

Not these photographs, perhaps because of the waves of destruction and because the ash that seems to cover everything: what is pertinent in the Boven Digoel photographs seems to be on the surface. The surface is rich, often in "grease marks", "organic layers" that "all reveal a contact that has taken place".[46] There are smears on it (who knows by whom), there are traces of fire or of cigarette burns, stains of mould, imprints of fingers of those who once held the picture in their hand. This surface of the Boven Digoel photographs, and not the sun-beaten *clearing* of the Boven Digoel camp, comes close to Heidegger's foursome – the stains, the wrinkles, perhaps memories and perhaps testimonies. Nothing much more – one can, if one is lucky enough to get hold of one of these things, turn the photograph around, and there it is again, another surface, a scribbling perhaps, like those in the old family Bibles – "*1934*?" "*Possibly grandmother.*"

The stains (unlike the Boven Digoel subjects) might leap out of the frame of the photograph – half of the stain might be in, half might be out. The smears can achieve what the colonial camera was so wary of – they can make faces, landscapes and statements of the photograph blurred. Suddenly, purblind people can see better that which "binds the smears and stains together."[47] Like in purblind people, in scholars trying to read a photograph there might arise a stronger sense of smell and touch – a knowing of a photograph, in another word, as consciousness, from "*conscientia* < *conscious*: who knows with another".[48]

Perhaps "knowing" is not the correct term – to "feel the thickness" of the two-dimensional photographs might be more what it is.[49] To feel privileged sitting at a table with a man or woman who happened to be there, in the camp, and who happens to be here, in the photograph. Maybe even (unwittingly of course!) to leave our own trace on the surface of the photograph, as we try to read it, with our fingers.

In 2011, I sat with Mrs Widayasih in her home in Jakarta again, with the single picture that was left of her family between us (figure 5).

It was a photograph showing her as a girl of about ten in Boven Digoel, in 1937 or 1938. "This is I, the girl in the white dress", she said. There were, of course, innumerable details and categories possible to read all over the picture. But whatever I tried to say, Mrs Widayasih insisted: "You see, this

46 Guiseppe Penone, quoted in Robert Lumley, *Arte Povera* (London: Tate Publishing, 2004), 52.

47 Georges Perec, *W, or The Memory of Childhood* (Boston: Godine, 1988), 68.

48 Barthes, *The Neutral*, 95.

49 The term belongs to Pérez-Oramas, in Luis Pérez-Oramas, ed., *León Ferrari and Mira Schendel: Tangled Alphabets with Essays by Andrea Guinta and Rodrigo Naves* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2009), 35.

Figure 5 Photographer unknown (internee of Boven Digoel), "This is I, the girl in the white dress," c. 1938

Source: Private collection of Mrs Widayasih, Jakarta

white dress. It was made by my mother; on her sewing machine." "Singer", I say. "Oh, no! Singer? Of course, not! Puff, the German one." An observer becomes himself a moving target. How much really might one wish to get there, into the picture; and where would one go from there? Naturally, one might even get scared. Good! Some have even wondered whether "being scared" is "an excellent basis" for writing history.[50]

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The essays in *Photography, Modernity and the Governed in Late-colonial Indonesia* examine, from a historical perspective, how contested notions of modernity, civilization and being governed were envisioned through photography in early twentieth-century Indonesia (c. 1901-1942), a period when a liberal reform program known as the Ethical Policy was being implemented under the Dutch colonial regime.

This volume is the first English-language study of the Ethical Policy. It is also the first study to examine 'ethical' ways of seeing through photography, a medium whose proliferation among a mass audience as well as amateur practitioners coincided with a reform era that brought significant social and political change to colonial Indonesia.

The essays in this collection, by leading scholars in the field – Susie Protschky, Jean Gelman Taylor, Rudolf Mràzek, Henk Schulte Nordholt, Karen Strassler, Pamela Pattynama, Joost Cotè and Paul Bijl – reveal how the camera evoked diverse, often contradictory modes of envisioning an ethically-governed colony, one in which the promises of 'modernity' and 'civilization' were contested notions. Photographs made by and for Indonesian men and women, Chinese, and Indo-Europeans provide unique insights into the concerns of historical actors whose views on the Ethical Policy have rarely been canvassed. Photographs taken by European authorities also provide new perspectives on how the reform program was conceived and implemented by the governing classes.

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